

36 PAGES SMALL BATHROOMS, BIG IDEAS

AUSTRALIAN

WIN A \$229 BOSCH DRILL <sup>page 123</sup>

# Handyman

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SQUEEZE IN A TUB

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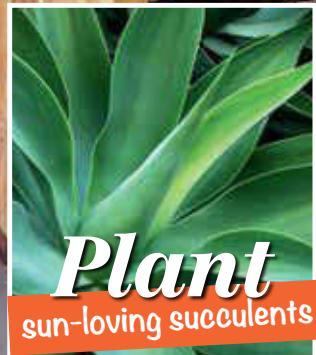
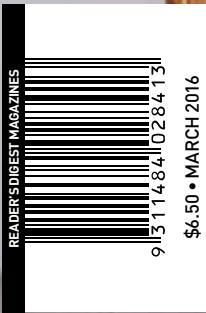
ANY SURFACE WITH  
THE FLICK OF A BRUSH

HOW TO  
**GET  
THIS  
LOOK**

ON A  
BUDGET

<sup>page  
36</sup>

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WALLS, DOORS & FLOORS



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# MARCH ISSUE



118



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COVER PHOTOGRAPHY  
STUART SCOTT

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to *Handyman* p123

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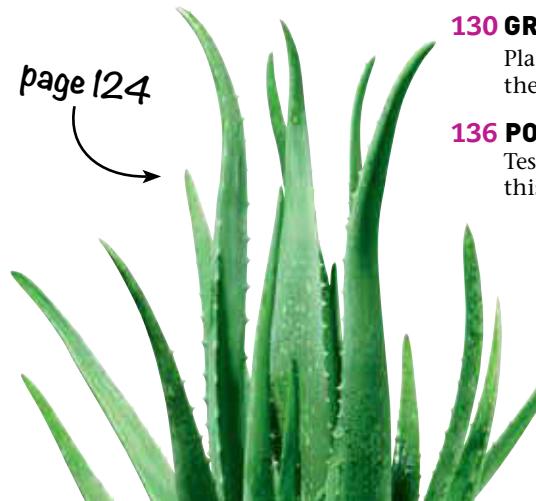
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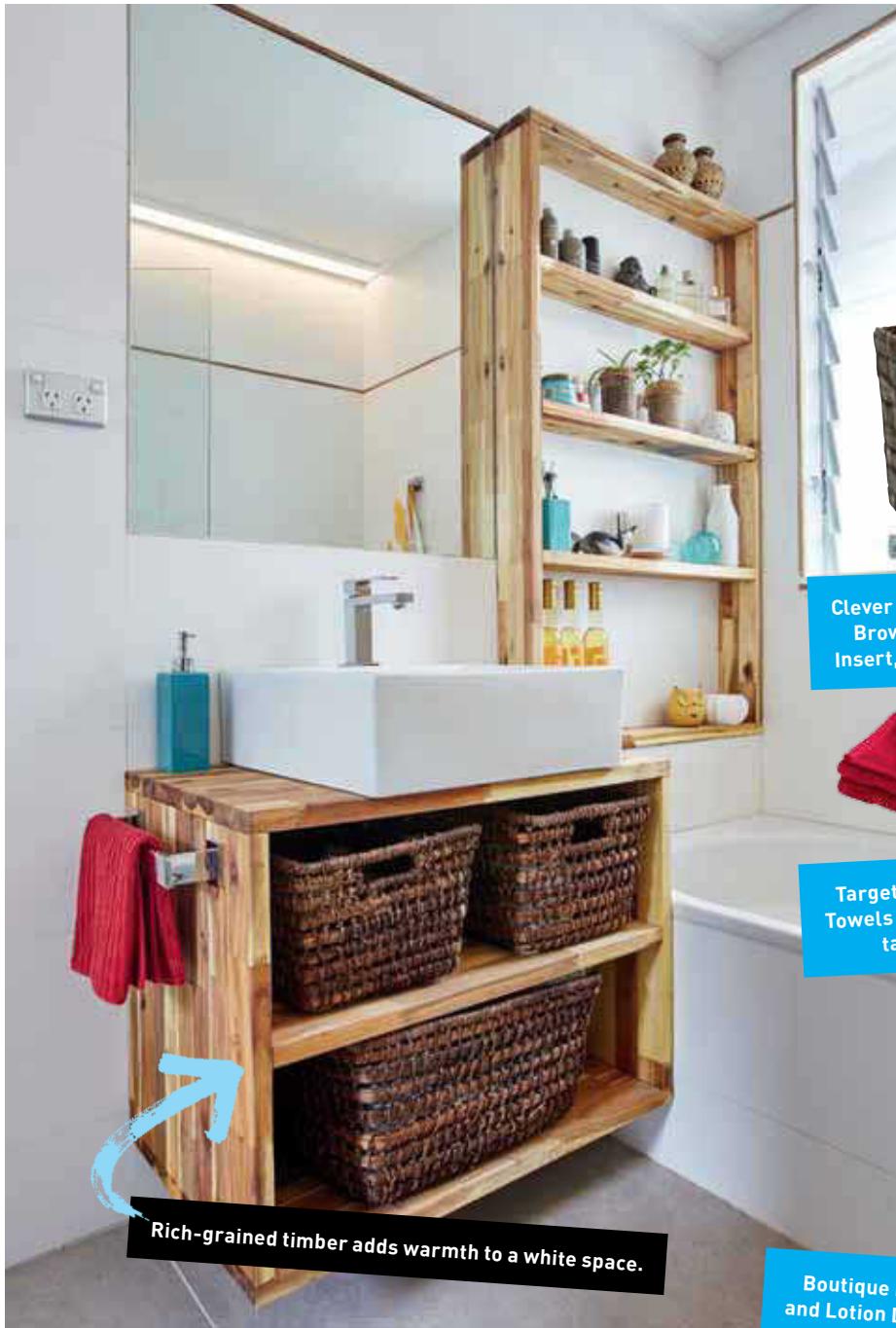


## GET THE LOOK

# LOVE THE COVER?

Team cool white tiles and custom-made timber shelving for a modern bathroom

MAIN PICTURE STUART SCOTT



To update an old bathroom without losing all of its charm, warm up all-white tiled walls with bespoke acacia furniture.

A frosted glass louvre window is a classic way to get both privacy and natural light. And open shelving can be used for storage and display while baskets hide the bathroom essentials.



Clever Cube Storage 32 x 32 x 35cm  
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Insert, \$20. [handy-storage.com.au](http://handy-storage.com.au)



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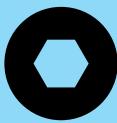


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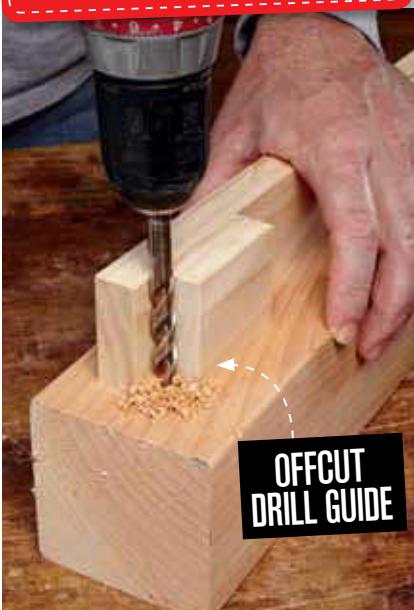
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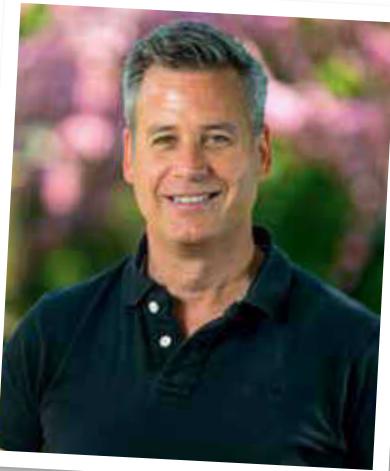
## THIS ISSUE

### HANDY HINT OF THE MONTH



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## EDITOR'S LETTER



**P**ainting is the most popular DIY job, and it's easy to see why, as it is extremely cost-effective and can make quite a distinct update to any area in the home and garden.

In this issue, we look at ways that just a couple of coats of paint can transform everything from the front door to outdoor furniture.

You can also experiment with sample pots until you're happy with the colour choice. And if you change your mind, you can easily paint over it.

#### Bathroom renos

One of the rooms that is the costliest to revamp is the bathroom, and it can involve tradies such as electricians, plumbers and waterproofers, depending on the scale of the renovation.

It can be like a jigsaw puzzle fitting the bath, loo, vanity and shower into a small space, so we have a gallery of ideas to help inspire you. See page 20.

We also suggest ways you can improve ventilation in your bathroom

and share two before and after makeovers, which have brought these rooms bang up to date.

#### Garden highlights

Potted plants can add a great feature to your backyard, and horticulturist Cheryl Maddocks shares secrets to choosing the right pots and how to make them thrive, on page 118.

And if your taste in plants leans towards the exotic and often bizarre, succulents may be for you, on page 124.

Cheryl also gives the lowdown on how you can create a dramatic landscape with these drought-resistant, sculptural sun lovers.

Enjoy the issue,

MANAGING EDITOR  
LEE DASHIELL



### PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

The new RockSolid Floor Coating Kit, from Rust-Oleum, gives a concrete floor a gloss terrazzo or metallic look.

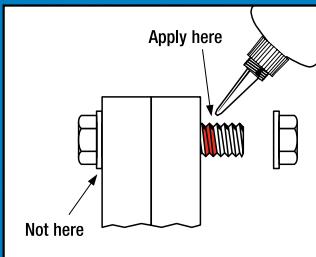
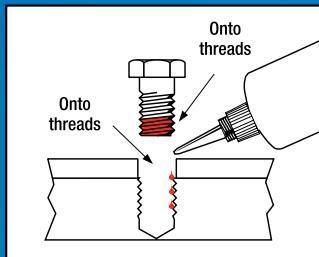
This innovative coating system cures in 24 hours and, as it's 20 times stronger than epoxy, your floor will last for years. Choose from Brilliant Blue, Earth Brown, Cherry Bomb, Gunmetal, Tan or Grey.



RockSolid Floor Coating Kit, from \$159. [rustoleum.com.au](http://rustoleum.com.au)

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## AUSTRALIAN HANDYMAN MAGAZINE

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[www.handyman.net.au](http://www.handyman.net.au)

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Published by Reader's Digest (Australia) Pty Ltd  
[ABN 81000565471] 80 Bay St, Ultimo, NSW 2007  
©2016 Reader's Digest (Australia) Pty Ltd  
Prepress by Sinnott Bros  
Unit 7, 108-120 Silverwater Road, Silverwater NSW 2128  
Printed by Times Printers Pte Ltd,  
16 Tuas Ave 5, Singapore 639340  
Distributed by NDD Distribution Pty Ltd



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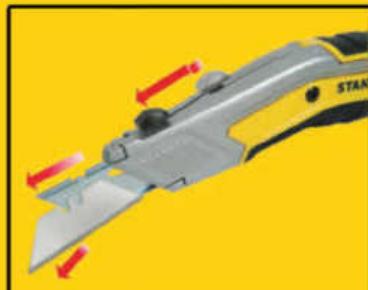
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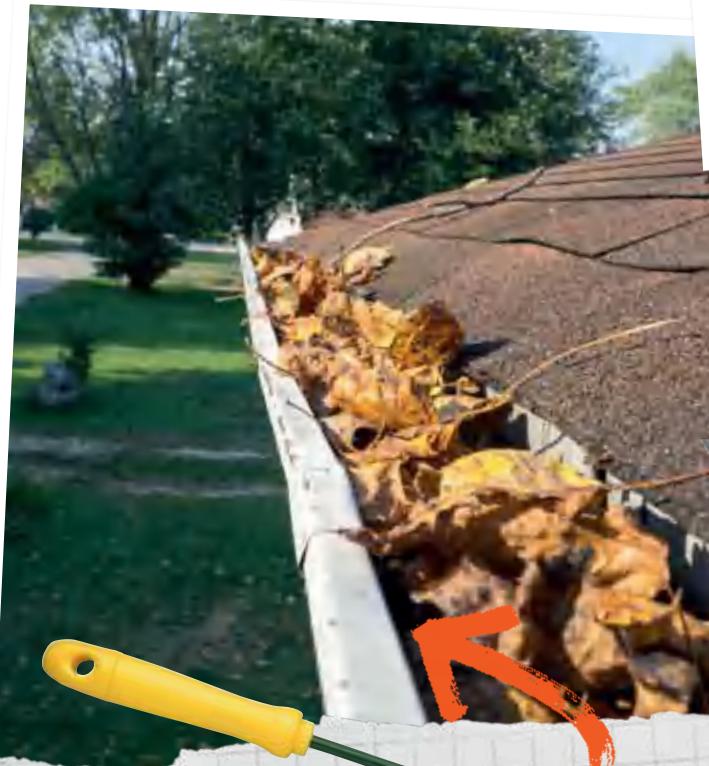


## HANDY STUFF



### Moss menace

Take care of troublesome moss, lichen or algae in the backyard using 30 Seconds Spray & Walk Away, \$41 for 2L. Designed for fast application, it's ideal for roofs, sealed concrete and asphalt, and contains no bleach or phosphate. [30secondscleaners.com](http://30secondscleaners.com)



### Leaf lifter

Keep gutters clear of leaves in autumn with ease using the Cyclone Gutter Cleaning Tool, \$20. Crafted from steel, it measures 405mm long. [cyclone.com.au](http://cyclone.com.au)

# HOUSEHOLD CLEANING

Try these tricks to stay on top of home and garden grime and save time

WORDS ASHLEIGH PERRIOTT



### Lard lover

Cut barbie cleaning time in half with Fat-Sorb, \$5 for 2L. Just add it to the drip tray and it will absorb fat, plus reduce odours and flare-ups. [pascoes.com.au](http://pascoes.com.au)



### Scrape 'n' scrub

Get the barbecue back in shape with the BBQ Buddy 3-in-1 Hand Grill Brush, about \$5. Featuring a brush, scourer and scraper, it can tackle the whole clean-up. It is heat-resistant and made of heavy-duty nylon. [bbqbuddy.com.au](http://bbqbuddy.com.au)



### Tool tonic

Give garden tools serious TLC with the WD-40 Specialist Lawn & Garden Powerful Foaming Cleaner, \$5 for 400g. Its water-based citrus formula removes resin, sap, dirt and grime in just a few minutes. > [wd40.com.au](http://wd40.com.au)

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[blackanddecker.com.au](http://blackanddecker.com.au)

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[hillmark.com.au](http://hillmark.com.au)



## Wonder wipe

Remove scuff marks, food grease and fingerprints using Selleys Sugar Soap Wall & Surface Cleaning Wipes, about \$5 for 25. They have a fresh citrus scent and won't damage walls.

[selleys.com.au](http://selleys.com.au)



## Timber tint

Camouflage scratches and scuffs on timber or bamboo surfaces with Gilly Stephenson's Scratch Cover, \$16 for 100ml. It nourishes dry timber with a simple buff and polish action and is available in two tints.

[gillystephenson.com](http://gillystephenson.com)



## Mess master

Keep your home pristine with the help of Goof Off The Miracle Remover, \$34 for 3.785L. It tackles all the tough stuff, from glue to crayon and lipstick. > [bunnings.com.au](http://bunnings.com.au)





## Block buster

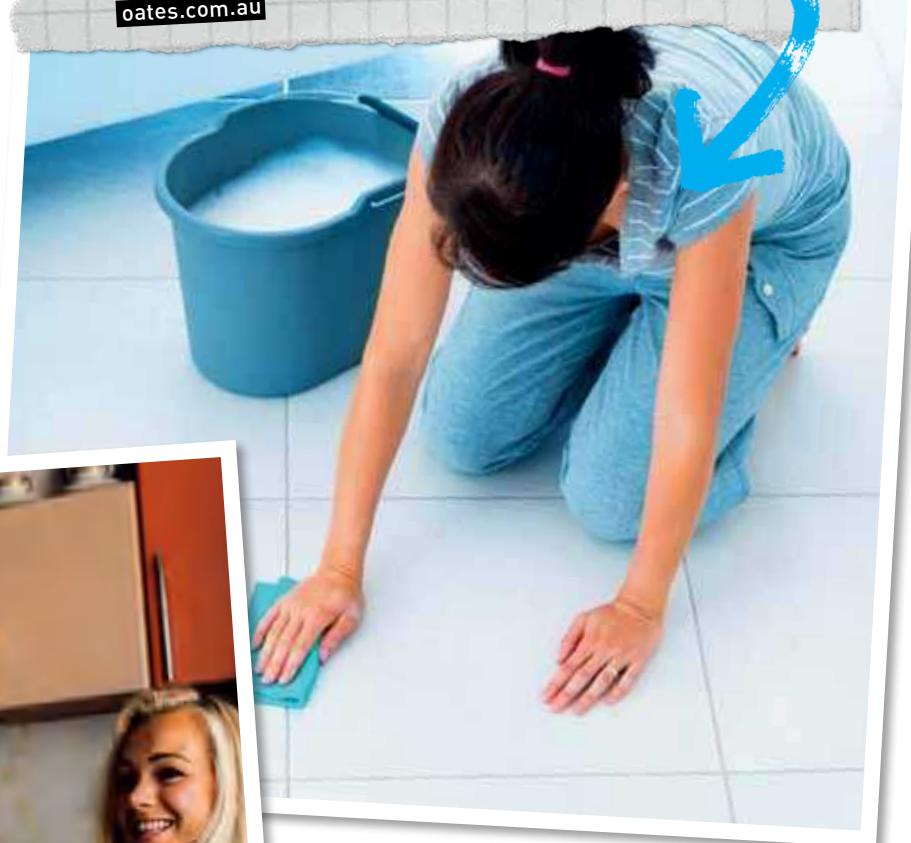
Clear out pipes and drains in the bathroom and laundry, as well as downpipes, with the Kärcher 7.5m Pipe Cleaning Kit, \$74. It suits all Kärcher electric pressure cleaners and removes blockages with the press of a trigger.

[karcher.com.au](http://karcher.com.au)

## Floor fresh

Cut down on drying time with Oates 535mm Sanitary Floor Squeegee Head, about \$27. The neoprene blade leaves floors hygienically clean.

[oates.com.au](http://oates.com.au)



## Refuse remover

Bring back order to your home with the Ryobi 1500W 30L Wet & Dry Vacuum, \$169. It features on-board accessory storage, as well as a blower function.

[ryobi.com.au](http://ryobi.com.au)



## Super scrub

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[rubbermaid.com.au](http://rubbermaid.com.au)

## Fresh face

Give tiles a new lease of life when scrubbing just won't cut it with the White Knight Grout Pen, \$14 for 5ml. Its fast-drying formula and self-guiding design make it easy to re-whiten painted or discoloured grout. ☀

[whiteknightpaints.com.au](http://whiteknightpaints.com.au)





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## BUYER'S GUIDE

### Perfect palings

Touch-dry in one hour, the Walpamur Fence Finish, about \$56 for 10L, is fuss free and ideal for use on rough-sawn timber, pine pickets and treated pine lattice. [bunnings.com.au](http://bunnings.com.au)

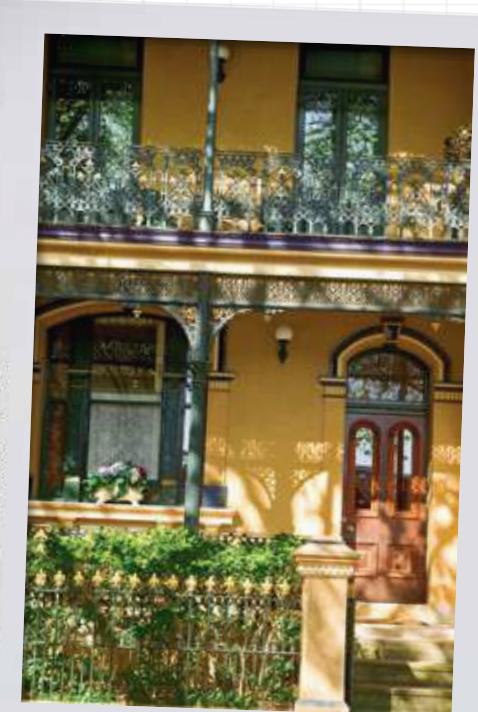


# EXTERIOR PAINT EFFECTS



### Character coat

Add interest to walls with Rockcote Havana Full Texture Coloured Render, \$95 for 10L. It requires no painting and is easy to apply with a trowel or roller. [rockcote.com.au](http://rockcote.com.au)



### Stunning stone

Refresh your old pots with Crommelin Liquid Stone, \$27 for 1L. Water-based, it is available in Terracotta, Sandstone, Limestone and Basalt. [crommelin.com.au](http://crommelin.com.au)

# Give outdoor surfaces a fresh new look using finishes that are specially formulated for the job

WORDS ASHLEIGH PERRIOTT

## Ray resistant

Featuring a UV barrier, Taubmans Sun Proof Exterior Low Sheen Paint, \$50 for 4L, leaves a finish that won't fade under the harsh Australian sun. [taubmans.com.au](http://taubmans.com.au)

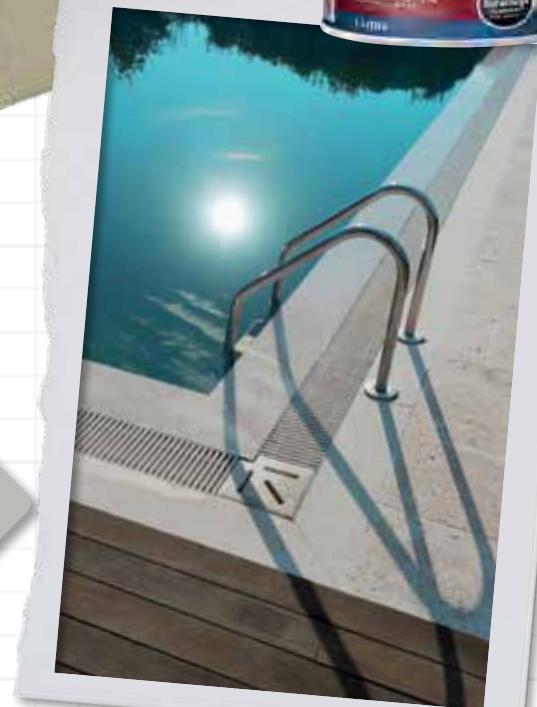


## Roof redo

Formulated for the safe collection of rainwater, Dulux Roof & Trim, \$204 for 10L, is the sustainable choice for repainting the roof and gutters. [dulux.com.au](http://dulux.com.au)

## Walkway wonder

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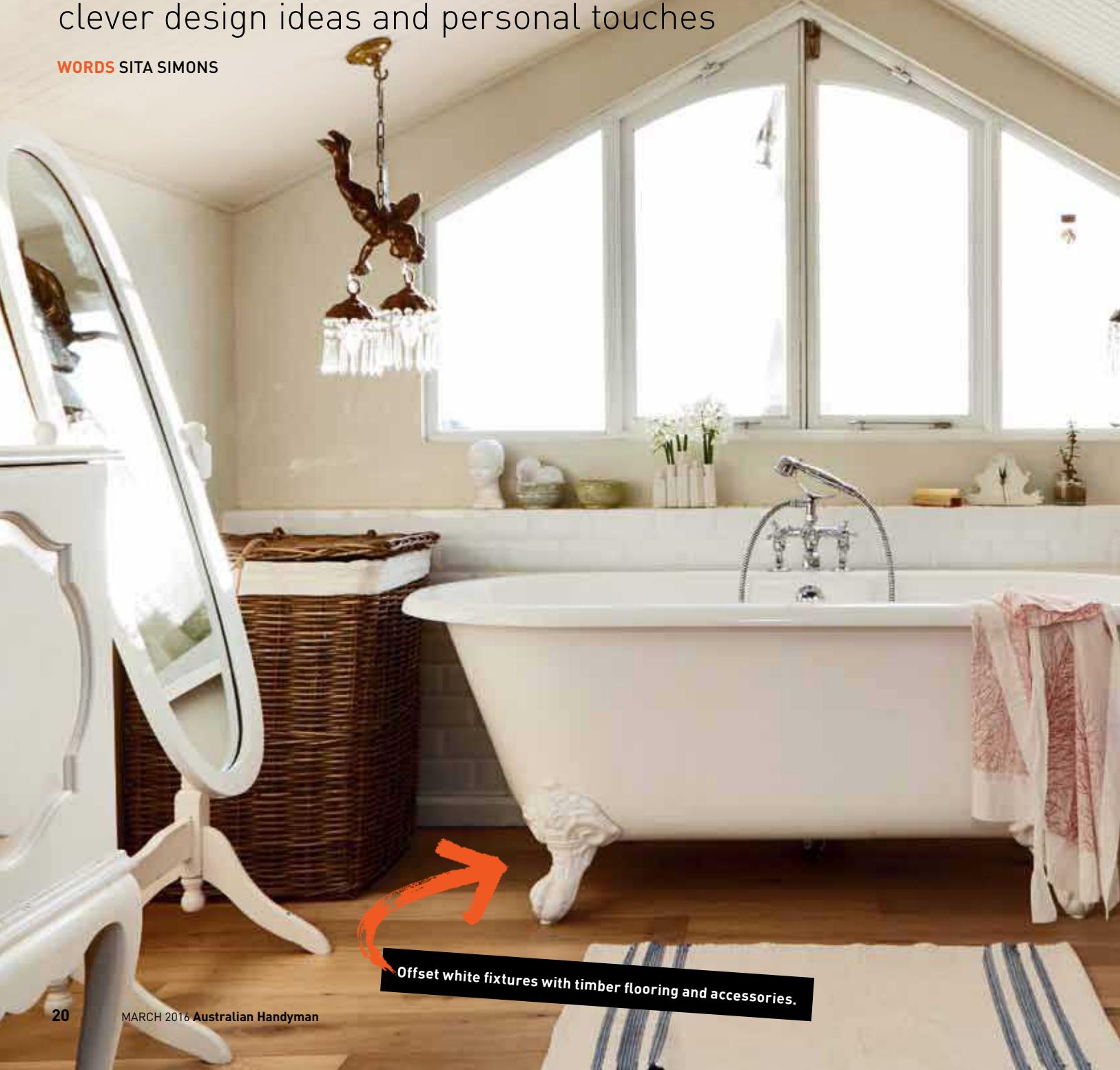


FOR YOUR INSPIRATION >>>

# WOW FACTOR BATHROOMS

Make any space your own with these clever design ideas and personal touches

WORDS SITA SIMONS



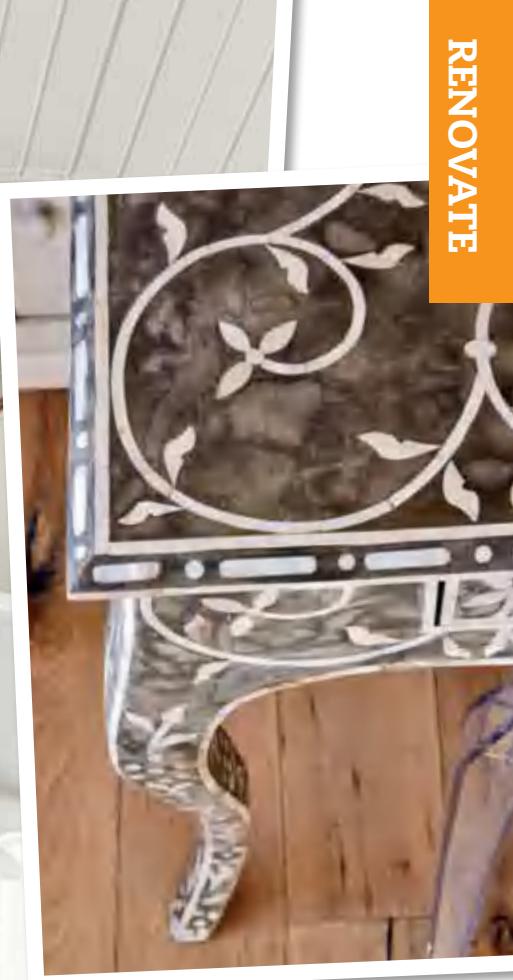
Offset white fixtures with timber flooring and accessories.

A bathroom really has only three standard elements of toilet, sink and shower or tub. And as it's often the smallest room, the layout and design of the space, rather than the size, are what matter.

When designing a bathroom, personal style is key. Interior designer and renovation specialist Monnia Dziril of The Renovation Box ([therenovationbox.com](http://therenovationbox.com)) advises being guided by what you love.

'You spend a lot of time in the bathroom, so make it a space that you feel good in,' says Monnia.

Depending on budget and DIY skills, money can be splurged or saved. A lot can be done simply with paint, tiles and accessories to achieve the look and feel you want.



**The vanity is a secondhand cupboard that was painted white and a sink plumbed in.**  
**ABOVE** A mother-of-pearl table adds a decorative element.

### Vintage classic

The master bedroom of this home was in the attic space, so the ensuite had a dormer window and a sloping ceiling as architectural features, with both worked into the design.

Taking cues from the feminine but not overly fussy bedroom, the bathroom was done in vintage style and the result was a cosy space that invites privacy and a sense of escape.

Positioned directly under the window to take advantage of the

filtered light and create visual impact is a large claw-foot porcelain tub.

Behind it, a subway-tiled half wall doubles as a bathtub shelf, while the rest of the walls are painted and the sloping ceiling is panelled.

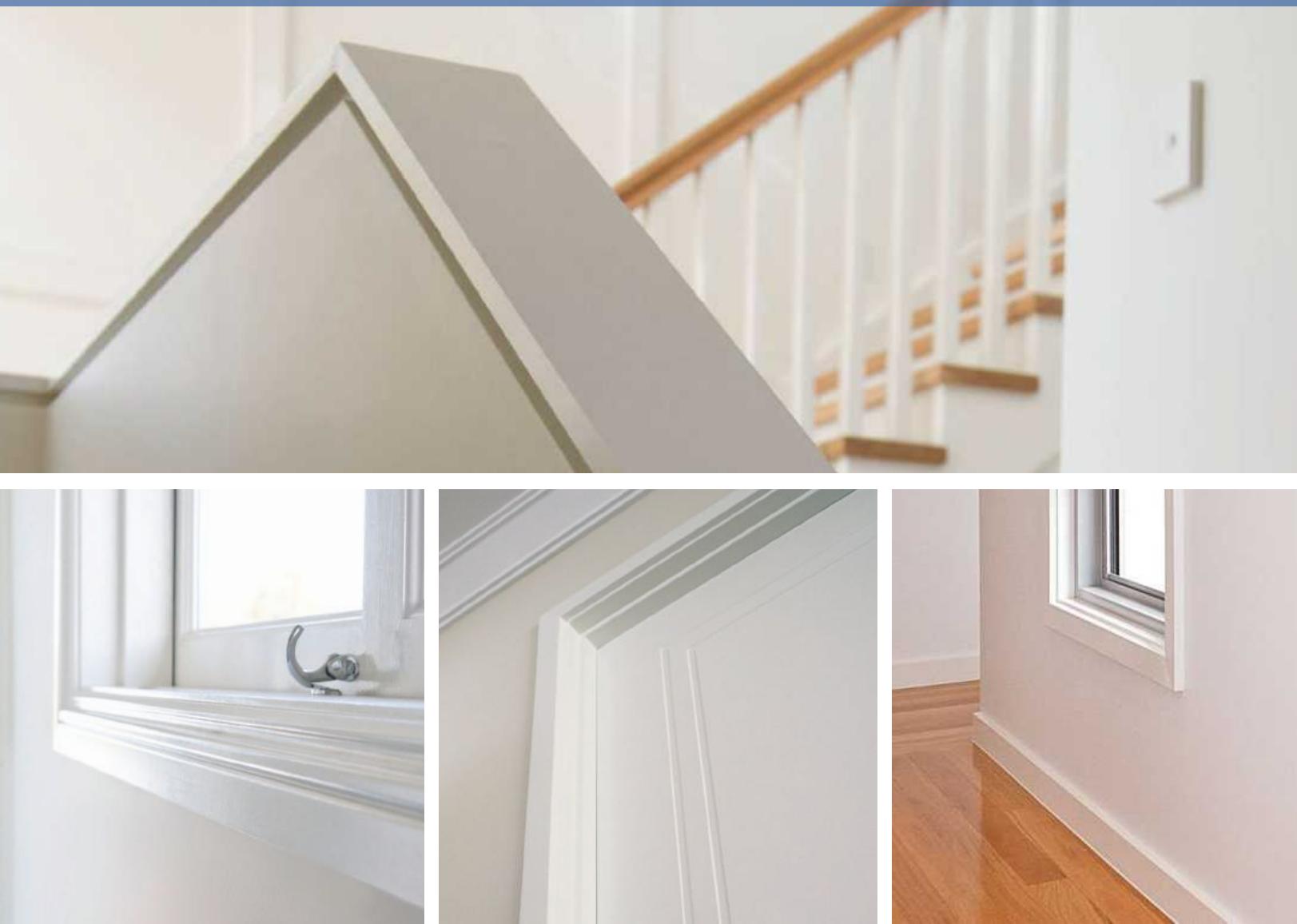
The mother-of-pearl inlay console table is a stand-out feature, adding pattern and colour, and complements the romantic but bespoke feel.

'Using furniture from around the home can add real personality and charm to a bathroom,' says Monnia. >



Try timber-look porcelain tiles as an easy to install, low-maintenance option for a vintage bathroom

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Even in a bathroom, you can display favourite items.

### DESIGN TIP

Display like objects together in groups of odd numbers, or objects of varying height and size in a similar palette.

### Artistic touch

If you have art or collectibles, don't rule out the bathroom as a display space.

This home was full of flamboyant art, so the owners couldn't imagine a white or neutral space, as even in the bathroom they wanted to be surrounded by the things they liked.

'Don't let your personality stop at the bathroom door. Like any room in your home, ask yourself how you want to feel in there and use that as the guiding design principle,' says Monnia.

But take care when choosing display pieces for wet areas, customising the space using waterproofing materials and techniques as the owners did for the artwork on the door panels.

Glass mosaic tile sheets are an inexpensive way to create a designer bath or shower recess. Or you can cut sheets into strips to create a decorative border for existing tiles. >





Create a bathroom that makes you feel like you're on holiday as soon as you step inside



#### Recycled haven

The features of a home often dictate the design direction for a bathroom.

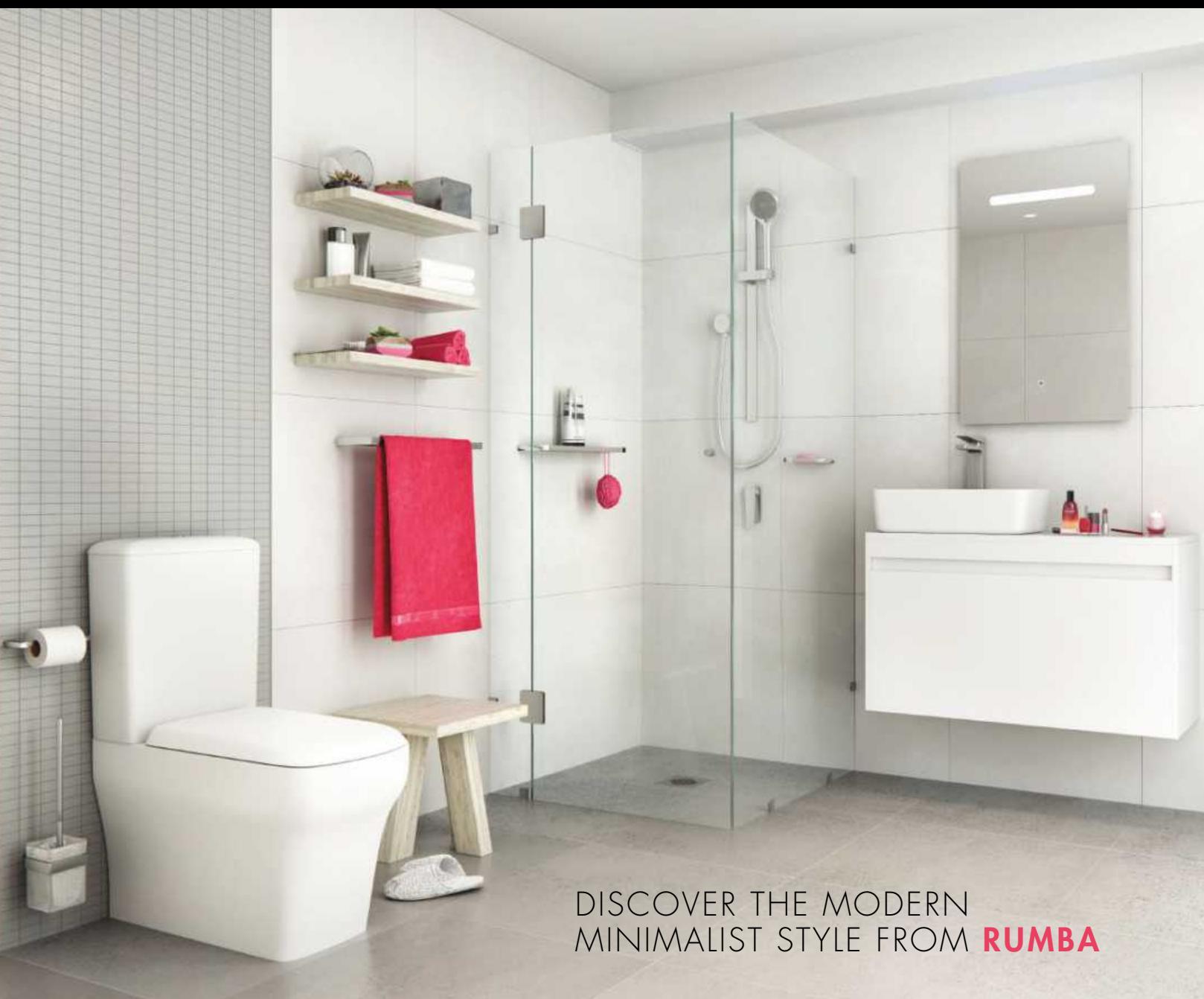
In this converted farmhouse, the stone walls were retained and simply painted white. A new timber shutter for the recessed window was crafted out of an old internal door.

'Nothing is refined or perfect, and it's a great example of how to recycle and save money while creating a warm, unique space,' says Monnia.

A salvaged ceramic tub was given a paint makeover and became the focal point of the space.

The black terracotta floor tiles are handmade and they set the tone for the earthy, provincial feel of the room.

A bevelled mirror and an Art Deco light bring in more turn-of-the-century elements that speak to the pared back aesthetic and simple functionality. >



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## Spacious luxury

Tiling all the way from floor to ceiling can make a small space seem bigger, but using a bold paint colour on the walls is the way to make a statement in a bathroom with space to spare.

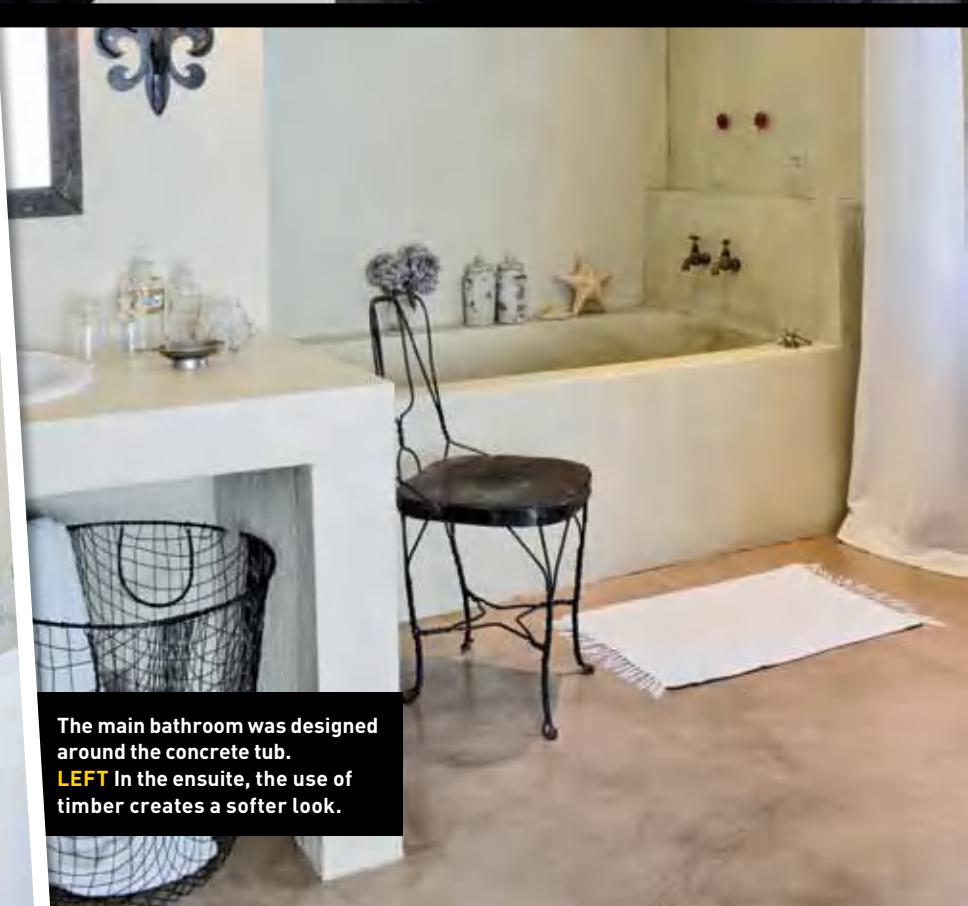
A warm blue-toned grey goes with everything, especially white fittings.

'Using a modern colour such as this grey lends a new dimension to classic ceramic fittings, bringing it all up to date,' says Monnia.

To pick up the black-and-white scheme from the bedroom, this ensuite uses a classic tiled checkerboard floor, the grey walls and the reflection of the wallpaper in the mirror.

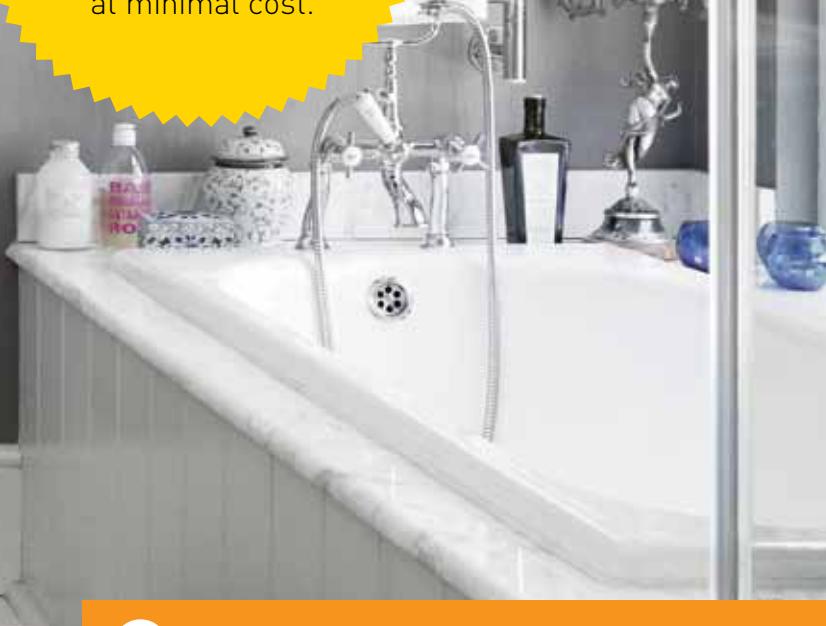
A timber side table and black velvet ottoman that invites you to linger in the space make it seem more than just a functional area. Grey-veined marble is used to great effect as a ledge around the tub and a splashback for the sink.

There is an immediate sense of luxury, but comfort is also present.



## BUDGET TIP

Use an expensive material such as marble sparingly in the bathroom to add a luxurious feel at minimal cost.



See more incredible bathroom ideas  
Visit [pinterest.com/diyhandyman](http://pinterest.com/diyhandyman)

### Material matters

These homeowners decided that traditional spaces weren't for them.

Keen to have a stone bath in the main bathroom, they pushed the idea and essentially moulded the whole room out of concrete. They ended up using concrete in the ensuite as well.

Their choice of main material meant a limited palette of colours.

'Concrete can be mixed with fibre glass, polymers and aggregates so it is suitable for a bathroom. This makes it

very durable and easy to clean, and lends a grounded, organic feel that is textural and warm,' says Monnia.

Adding a pale pigment to the concrete mix created neutral colours that work well with the natural light.

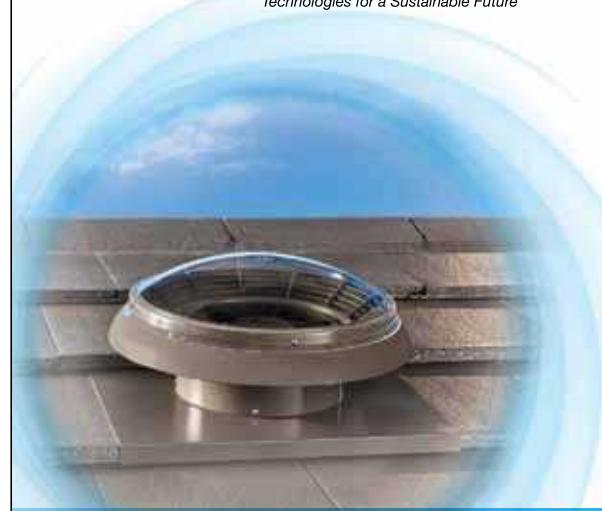
Lighting is very important in bathrooms, especially with a flat, non-reflective surface like concrete.

'In a bathroom, you need to see well, and the lighting over the mirrors in the ensuite is a great example of getting it right,' says Monnia. >



Team concrete with brass tapware and iron accessories to add texture and layer the look

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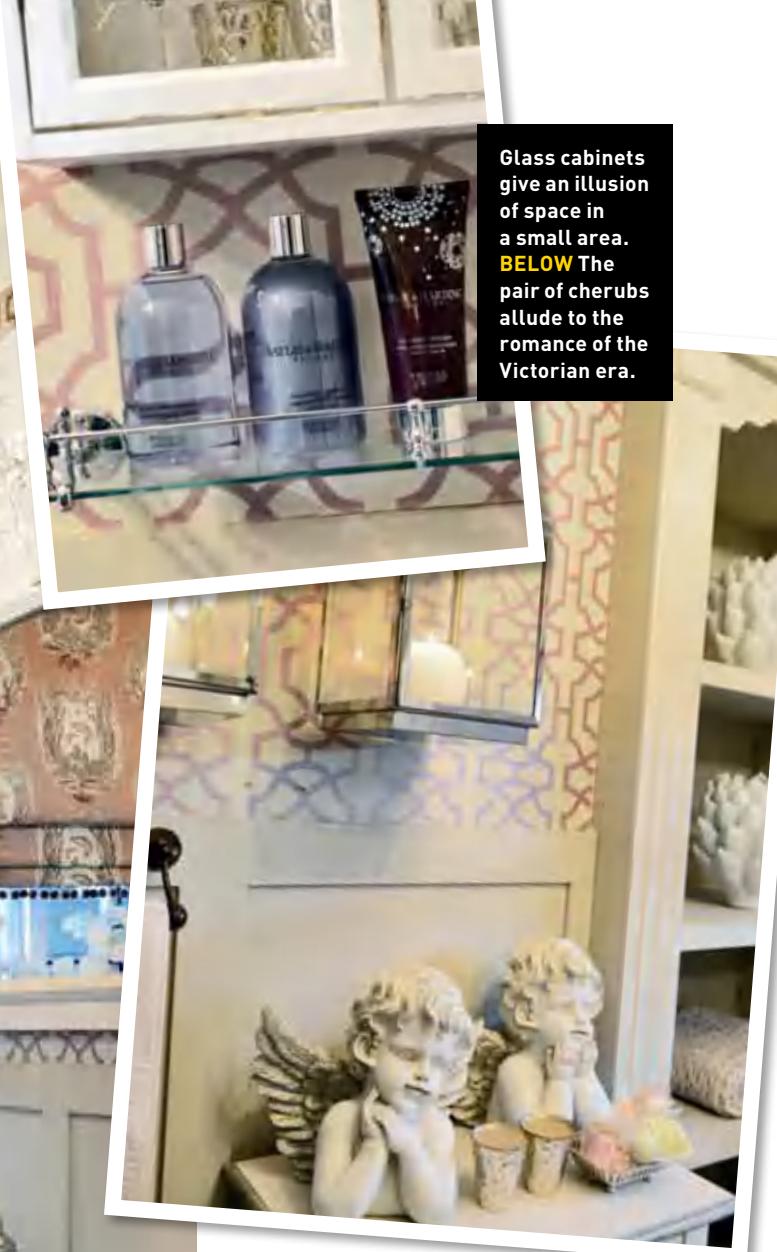
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## DESIGN TIP

Make contrasting prints work by sticking to the same colour palette, so no single element takes over and dominates.



Glass cabinets give an illusion of space in a small area.  
BELOW The pair of cherubs allude to the romance of the Victorian era.

## Victorian charm

Throwing out the rule book about small spaces, the owners of this bathroom proved more can be more when working with limited floorspace.

While narrow, it still has all the essentials, and even includes seating, but manages not to feel cramped and is still comfortable to move about in.

'The layout is everything. Get that right and you can work with any space. What has been achieved very well here is scale,' says Monnia.

'The window and the mirror are a similar size, and the bathtub is positioned to be in balance with the pedestal basin and furniture on the opposite side of the room.'

'This is really key to utilising small spaces while keeping them comfortable to be in.'

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# FAMILY BATHROOM OVERHAUL

Rejig the floorplan to fit a full-length bathtub in a compact space

WORDS SANDRA BRIDEKIRK PICTURES STUART SCOTT

**W**hen Handyman contributor Sandra Bridekirk moved into her Sydney home eight years ago, she had no immediate plans to renovate the main bathroom.

But with a growing family and improvements being made in the rest of the house, the room gradually began to look tired and out of character.

As it was a small space, the simple option would have been to install a new shower, vanity and toilet in the same positions, but the family wanted

to add a bathtub, which made planning the reno a lot harder.

'An interior designer friend said it couldn't be done, but we managed it,' says Sandra.

The room was 1800mm wide, the length of a standard large tub, which meant the bath would be 800mm wide, more than Sandra had anticipated, so she searched for streamlined fittings.

'Eventually, I found products that would fit without it feeling like you were sitting on the toilet to use the vanity,' says Sandra.

MAKING AN IMPACT

Several design tricks were used to make the bathroom look more spacious.

• **WATERFALL EFFECT** Large glossy white tiles were chosen for the side walls and travertine-look ceramic tiles for the floor and far wall, drawing the eye in to create a waterfall effect.

• **BLIND CORNERS** A standard recess would have taken up too much space, so Sandra chose a cut-corner shower with a frameless screen.

• **MIRROR IMAGE** Mirrors add to the illusion of space and reflect light, so a large mirrored shaving cabinet was

recessed into the wall to make it as low profile as possible.

• **SLEEK DESIGN** 'It may seem a small detail, but if you avoid having things like the toilet-roll holder and loo brush visible from the door, it adds hugely to the feeling of space,' says Sandra. >



Before

## Sandra's plan

- **STRIP** the room and tear out the floor and wall tiles.
- **REMOVE** and replace the old Villaboard on the walls, adding polyester insulation.
- **EXTEND** PVC drainage to the opposite wall to allow connection to a new narrow vanity.
- **ADD** new energy-efficient LED lighting and an extractor fan.
- **LAY** tiling and install new space-saving appliances and a frameless glass shower screen.



### DESIGN TIP

Save space by installing powerpoints inside cabinetry and securing the hand-towel rail to the side of the vanity.

**After**

Light and bright, the new bathroom is now spacious enough for a tub.



The top-mounted sink is modern and sleek.

**Cutting costs**

- ⊕ **NO WASTE** The old vanity and mirror were listed on Freecycle, and the shower base was put out for council pick up.
- ⊕ **ENERGY SAVER** Dimmable LED lights were installed, meaning long-term power savings.
- ⊕ **RECYCLED RENO** The shower rail was a recent addition, so it was kept, cleaned and refitted. And the wall insulation was left over from a previous renovation.
- ⊕ **PIPE DREAM** All plumbing was kept in situ, with only the new vanity requiring an extension. >

## GETTING STARTED

Once the plans were drawn up, it was time to call in the tradies.

'The plumber had to rework the taps to accommodate the new bath and work out the most efficient way to get drainage across the room to the vanity,' says Sandra.

Pieces of the compressed fibro flooring were cut out to allow access to the pipes beneath. Once the work was done, new strips of the same product were attached to the joists.

'I wanted to centre the toilet and vanity to look best in the space, so the plumber did this by bringing PVC pipes across under the flooring,' she says.

He then ran water pipes over to the new vanity position.

Light switches and a powerpoint were roughed in by an electrician and a cut-in for a three-in-one extractor fan and heat lamp was made. A duct outlet was then added so the fan could be vented to the outside.



**Mix curves and angles in white, glass and chrome for a streamlined bathroom**



A cut-corner shower was custom-made for the space.

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## BUDGET TIP

Choose end-of-line floor tiles and use the savings to buy better wall tiles, and ask for a discount if buying several items.

### What it cost

Plumber	\$2200
Electrician	\$485
Tiler	\$2880
Gyproc	\$150
Gyproc	\$320
Tiles	\$709
Vanity	\$799
Toilet	\$680
Bathtub	\$1150
Tapware	\$650
Shower screen	\$2167
Lighting, fan	\$200
Shaving cabinet	\$430
Towel rails	\$180
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$13,000</b>

A compact vanity and recessed mirrored cabinet provide ample storage.

## TAKING SHAPE

Once the wall panels were done, the waterproofing process began and eventually the room was retiled.

Next, the plumber came back and put in the toilet, vanity and tapware in the same positions where Sandra had originally drawn chalk outlines.

The final detail was a cut-corner shower recess, custom-made to fit the space. It was an extra expense, but it

completed the bathroom true to the brief. And the results even exceeded Sandra's expectations.

'No matter how much you look at an outline on the floor, it's hard to visualise the end result,' says Sandra.

'I love it. It looks so modern and is very easy to clean, and we managed to fit in that bath. It actually looks more spacious than I had hoped.' ☀



Visit bathroom showrooms for reno inspiration and to get a feel for scale

GET THE  
LOOK



Forme Organic Oval  
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[forme bathroomcollection.com.au](http://forme bathroomcollection.com.au)



Handihomes Stainless Shower  
Hair Strainer, \$13.  
[handihome.com.au](http://handihome.com.au)



Estilo Hand Shower Rail Set  
and Wall Connector, \$55,  
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Johnson Tiles, 300 x 300mm Ultra  
White Gloss Ceramic Wall Tile,  
\$33 for 14. [johnson tiles.com.au](http://johnson tiles.com.au)

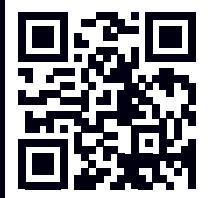


  
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# SMALL SPACE UPDATE

Revamp a cramped bathroom by installing a brand-new shower, bath, toilet and vanity

WORDS AND PICTURES STUART SCOTT

**T**he bathroom in this old cottage was dated and in poor shape and the overall space was barely 2.4m x 1.8m.

Everything was piecemeal and badly done. The old wall and floor tiles had been tiled over in the past and the cast iron tub had more recently had a shower installed over it.

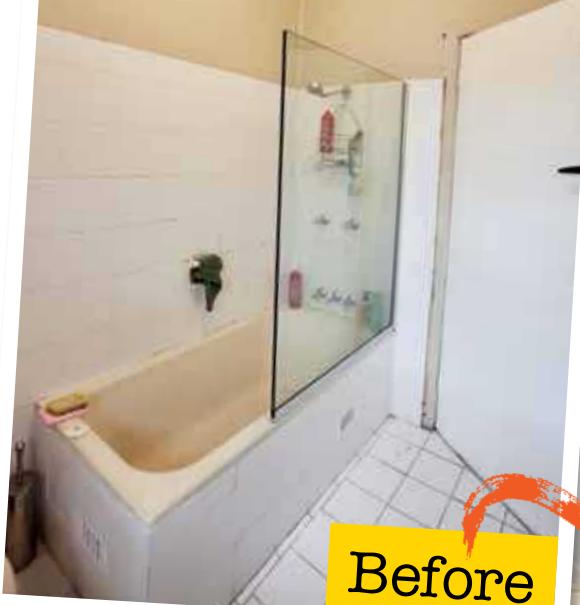
The challenge was not only to strip away the old materials, but also to add both a full-sized shower and separate bathtub in the new bathroom. To gain space, we replaced the old door with a sliding door before the reno began.



Before

After

Changing the layout made room for a separate shower and tub.



## TILE RESTYLE

Extra-large tiles were selected to provide clean uncluttered surfaces that amplify the space.

Only four of the 900 x 900mm grey tiles were required for the floor, including a single tile being used for the shower recess. On the walls, 900 x 300mm satin alabaster tiles with a rectified edge were used.

At a height of 2000mm, in line with the top of the frameless shower screen, 10mm cedar trim was added to relieve the large expanse of light tiles on the walls.

This trim was also used to frame the frosted-glass louvre window above the bathtub that replaced the dated double-hung window. >

**Structural changes**



Originally, the bathroom had brick-veneer walls laid over a formed-concrete floor. This made it tricky to re-route services to suit the new floorplan and caused problems with the large-format tiles, which are ideally laid over good substrates. Ultimately, the walls and floor were completely removed and new modern materials were used to create true, even surfaces. A false ceiling was also installed to house an aluminium fitting for LED strip lighting and an in-line extractor fan.



Watch how to install a sliding door  
Subscribe at [handyman.net.au/sliding-door](http://handyman.net.au/sliding-door)

## TAILOR-MADE SHELVES

A double-ended bathtub was installed below the new louvre window.

The narrow ledge located at the foot of the tub was topped with high, custom-made timber shelves that match the bespoke wall-hung vanity.

Baskets are used to keep essentials tucked away on the vanity shelves.

A flush-mounted mirror above the streamlined white basin completes the sleek, contemporary look. ☀



Add warmth to an all-white bathroom by using a rich-grained timber



**After**

Made-to-measure shelving provides plenty of storage in a small bathroom.

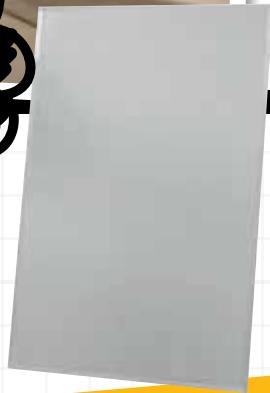
# Before



## STUART'S PICKS



Mondella Square Vitreous China Rococo Basin, \$93. [mondella.com.au](http://mondella.com.au)



Everton Polished Bevel Edge Mirror, 900 x 600mm, \$32. [everton.com.au](http://everton.com.au)



Brasshards Chrome Rubic Basin Mixer, \$166. [brasshards.com.au](http://brasshards.com.au)

### Materials

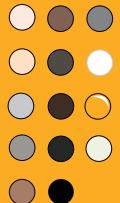
Tiles, adhesive	\$750
Vanity, shelves	\$200
Tapware, mixers	\$600
Toilet suite, basin	\$450
Shower screen	\$1600
Bathtub	\$2000
Lighting, fan	\$1500
Louvre window	\$300
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$7400</b>



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# LAY WALL TILES DIY

Get a fresh new look and save money with these easy tiling techniques

**R**enovating the bathroom is a great way to improve your home while adding value, and you can make the project more affordable by laying tiles yourself.

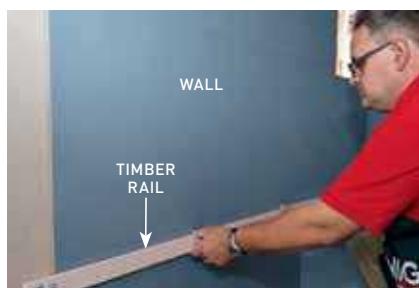
To calculate the number of tiles needed for a wall, multiply the length by the height, then deduct any openings and add 10% for wastage.



**Ensure a licensed professional applies all waterproofing**

## What you need

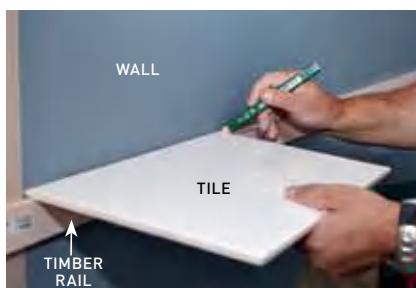
- Tiles
- Adhesive
- Tile spacers and wedges
- Notched trowel
- Measuring tape
- Pencil
- Bucket
- Drill and mixing paddle
- Tile cutter
- Spirit level
- Timber rail



### 1 Mark a datum line

Deduct 20mm from the tile height and mark a straight line along the wall at this height. Create a temporary rail by attaching a piece of timber to the studs using screws, checking for level.

**TIP** The datum line ensures tiles are level and accounts for uneven floors.



### 2 Cut the tiles

To work out the width of the last tile in a row, position one tile on the timber rail, starting at one end. Move it along the rail, one tile width at a time, adding the width of a spacer between each tile. Measure the width for the last tile and cut to size with a tile cutter.



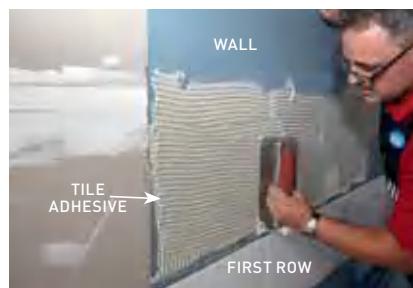
### 3 Prepare the adhesive

Add tile adhesive powder to a bucket of water and blend using a power drill with a mixing paddle until it has the consistency of toothpaste, adding water or powder as necessary.

**TIP** Use a tile adhesive compatible with your waterproof lining.



Watch the video 'How to Tile a Bathroom Wall' at [bunnings.com.au/diy-advice](http://bunnings.com.au/diy-advice)



#### 4 Lay the first row

Spread adhesive onto the back of the first tile using a notched trowel. Position the base of the tile on the timber rail and push it against the wall. Clean off any excess adhesive and push plastic wedges under the lower corners of the tile.

#### 5 Tile the wall

Lay the rest of the tiles across the first row, inserting spacers in between. Check for level when complete, using wedges to adjust the tiles as necessary. Start the next row, applying adhesive to the wall and laying tiles one row at a time. Repeat to finish tiling the wall.

#### 6 Lay the base row

Remove the timber rail and lay the base row, cutting tiles as required. Let the adhesive cure, then remove the spacers. Spread grout over the tiles to fill the joints, wiping away the excess with a damp sponge and buffing with a soft cloth once dry.



Find it at Bunnings

# DESIGNER BATHROOMS

Choose a look to suit your lifestyle then create a luxury bathroom on a DIY budget

**T**he first step to renovating a bathroom is to choose the look you want.

No longer just a functional space, there are lots of bathroom design styles to choose from that provide everyday luxury and can be successfully reproduced in your home.

To inspire you when deciding on the style you are after, here are three stunning designs.



### Contemporary cool

Industrial chic is very popular, but you don't need to live in a warehouse to get the look.

Texture is key, so bring it in with concrete-look flooring and mosaic wall tiles, to offset gloss white fixtures and shiny fittings.

For a signature space, add vintage-style metal and timber storage, and copper accents such as lighting and accessories. >

Loft

- 1 **BRILLIANT** Hugo Charcoal Pendant Light, \$103.50.
- 2 **COULSON TILES** 600 x 600mm Advance Grey Tiles, \$42.90 per sqm.
- 3 **CAROMA** Kari Wall-faced WELS 4-star Toilet Suite, \$681.
- 4 **ESSENTIAL WASH-PLANES** 900 x 480mm White Matt Acrylic Floating Vanity Basin, \$719.
- 5 **COULSON TILES** 19 x 19mm Copper Mosaic Tiles, \$5.50 per sheet.
- 6 **BRILLIANT** Cumulus Copper Pendant Light, \$155.
- 7 **METHVEN** Waipori WELS 3-star Satinjet Rail Shower, \$295.
- 8 **HIGHGROVE** 2000 x 254mm Frameless Shower Door Kit, \$409.
- 9 **CAROMA** 1675 x 570mm Urbane Back-to-wall Freestanding Bath, \$2050.
- 10 **COULSON TILES** 600 x 600mm Limit Stone Grigio Tile, \$42.90 per sqm.
- 11 **ROMAK** 1500 x 810mm Four-shelf Black Powder-coated Shelving Unit, \$39.98.

1 HOME DESIGN Bussi Concrete Pendant, \$59. 2 HOME DESIGN Castelli Concrete Pendant, \$59. 3 HOME DESIGN Teramo Concrete Pendant, \$59. 4 COULSON TILES Black Concrete Wall Tile, \$41.90 per sqm. 5 METHVEN Kiri Tai WELS 3-star Satinjet Rail Shower, \$229. 6 CIBO 900 x 600m Frame Mirror, \$277. 7 DORF Villa WELS 5-star Basin Mixer, \$128. 8 CIBO 900 x 850mm Coast Veneer Fresh Vanity, \$896. 9 CAROMA Sahara WELS 4-star Wall-faced Toilet Suite, \$496. 10 COULSON TILES 600 x 600mm Grand Calcutta Marble-look Floor Tile, \$41.90 per sqm. 11 CAROMA Vivas 1675mm Tile Flange Bath, \$346.

## Haven



### Sleek simplicity

For a spa experience at home, design the bathroom as a serene space to relax and retreat.

Opt for practicality and simplicity of form with the clean lines of a wall-hung vanity and frameless shower screen.

A marble-look floor and white walls contrast with dark tiles in the wet area, creating a cocoon effect and sense of luxury.



## French flair

The elegance and style of a French-inspired bathroom doesn't have to cost the earth.

Glossy black tiles, classic white wall panels and clear glass pendant lights set the scene.

A bespoke vanity featuring a countertop basin, a curvy freestanding monochrome tub and a few key accessories complete the look.



Provence

- ① COULSON TILES 300 x 100mm Arch Nero Tile, \$57.33 per sqm. ② CAROMA 1700mm Noir Freestanding Bath, \$2236.
- ③ MONDELLA Vivace Bath/Shower Mixer, \$119. ④ BRILLIANT Clear Laurent Pendant Light, \$93.95. ⑤ EVERTON 1200 x 900mm Bevel-edged Glass Mirror, \$71. ⑥ MONDELLA 480 x 370mm Concerto Vessel Above-counter Basin, \$114. ⑦ GERFLOR 3000mm Lifestyle Timber Senso Clear Vinyl Sheet, \$53.90 per sheet.
- ⑧ RICK MCLEAN'S DESIGNER BATHWARE 2000 x 1170mm Euro Frameless Sliding Shower Screen, \$806. 

# Caroma Bathroom Renovation



## Q&A with Alison Dillon

Alison Dillon, the founder and owner of Marketing Kitchen, talks with Kate Hartigan from Caroma, about her recent bathroom renovation and how she spends her time supporting charities such as Orphfund, Extended Families and the Royal Children's Hospital.



**Alison Dillon**

### **Firstly, tell me about your volunteering work and the charities/NGO's you are involved with...**

I have enjoyed volunteering my time for much of my adult life. I have done lots of work supporting different charities over the years; a couple of bike rides through Laos and China raising funds for Multiple Sclerosis, working with a project team to raise \$100,000 for the Royal Children's Hospital, trips to Africa with Orphfund and I spend time with children for a not-for-profit organisation called Extended Families.

### **Wow, tell me a bit about Extended Families**

I have a part-time foster child that I look after regularly—kind of like a big brother/big sister. Instead of emergency fostering you

have an ongoing relationship for years with a special needs child. This enables my child's single mother to have some quality time with her son, as well as different social experiences.

### **And Orphfund?**

Well, travel is my great passion so about five years ago I got involved with the home-grown Melbourne charity Orphfund that is 100% volunteer based. They've been working in Sierra Leone, Kenya and Uganda to run orphanages, build schools, amenities and huts, and provide care and education to many children. We also ship over big containers full of stuff—school supplies, old beds, computers etc...funnily enough I am going to send over my old Caroma toilet with the next shipment.

# Alison's Product Picks

- Cube 1600 Back to Wall Freestanding
- Liano Tapware
- Cube 500 Under Counter Basin
- Sahara Wall faced Toilet Suite
- Essence Rail Shower with Overhead
- Sahara Accessories

AVAILABLE AT BUNNINGS

**So, what triggered the decision to undertake a complete renovation of your Victorian house in Flemington?**

There were some major structural repairs that needed to be done, and for the last 10 years one of the two bedrooms has been dedicated as a home office. I decided I wanted use of the second bedroom again, and more room to entertain and network; so it made sense to do it all in one big hit starting with the bathroom.

**Tell me about your design inspiration – what was the look and feel you wanted to create?**

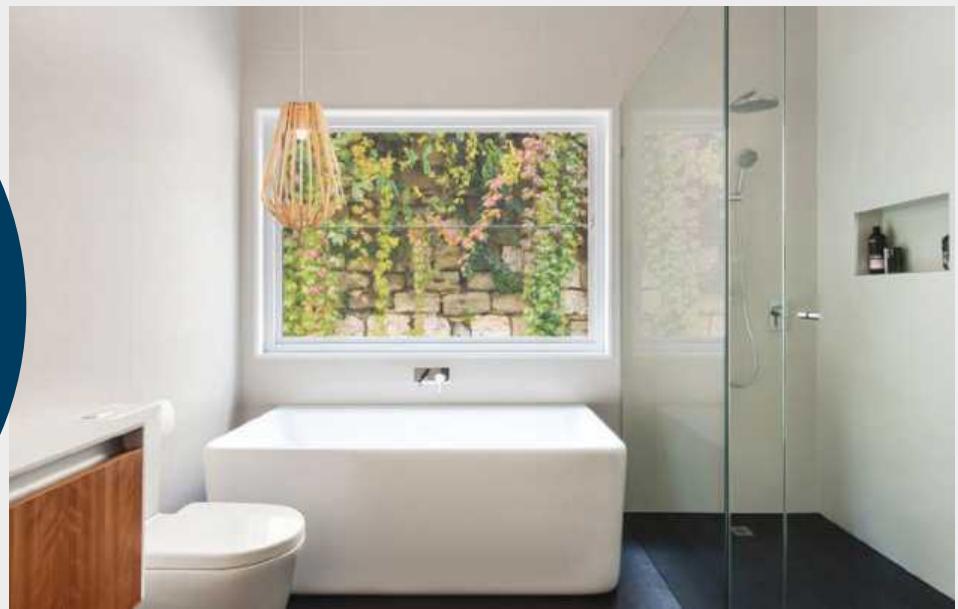
Well I really like the contemporary style, so that is a bit of a challenge in a heritage listed Victorian home. It's about trying to balance the old character with the simplicity of the contemporary style. A basic palette is critical and I have chosen blackbutt, dark grey and white for the house. I love the outdoors, trees and greenery so it is really important to me to bring the outside in. I want to do this in the bathroom by creating a hanging garden outside the window, things like that.

**How did you start the bathroom renovation?**

I have survived for 20 years without a bath and I thought 'now's the time'. I really started the whole design of the bathroom with two key pieces – the large window to bring the outdoor in and the bath. So, I started with – "which bath do I like?" and I really liked the Caroma Cube Back-to-Wall because it gives you that sense from the front that it is a freestanding bath, and then it is attached at the back which leads so nicely into the ledge and window. The Cube range is sleek, clean and has flowing curve lines which are very much my style.

**So, it all started with the bath?!**

Exactly! I then found the Caroma Liano tapware as I really liked the lines and high



quality contemporary look – then next followed the Cube 500 Under Counter Basin which had contrasting defined lines with flowing curves. I've always had a Caroma Toilet and it has a great reputation. I ended up going with the Sahara Toilet Suite which was really economical, is on trend and looks great.

Budget was also important to me as this is quite a large renovation and Caroma is well priced. So, I guess the key things for me when selecting products were quality, price, and functionality and I wanted products from a brand that I knew would last.

**Now, what are the challenges of undertaking a bathroom renovation?**

I guess one of the most challenging was that you do get a false sense of timing. I've watched renovations on TV and thought it would be much simpler and happen more quickly. The project management has taken much more time than expected, so I would say that project planning ahead is essential. Book people in advance. You only need one thing to be delayed and then all your other trades fall behind and you have to wait for their availability. So, my advice would be to make sure that you are realistic with yourself about timelines.

The other challenges are around how creative you want to be. There are Health and Safety and Compliance regulations and codes that you must adhere to; height restrictions etc, so I think informing yourself of these and how they fit into your creative vision, as well as being mentally prepared to be flexible on this vision, is important. Understanding these things upfront and incorporating them into the design process is essential.

**Thanks Alison, so to wrap things up, can you share with me what you love most about your bathroom...**

For me, it's the bath and the window.

I honestly just love it...it is the stunning feature that I wanted it to be and once I create the garden outside and it is established, there will be depth with maybe a water feature. You can see the outside reflection in the shower screen and tiles so you get this dimensional feel bouncing off all of the different elements in the bathroom. It's a gorgeous space and it will be great to look out over the garden whilst enjoying the bath and bathroom.

**So your inspiration and your vision began with the bath and the window, and despite all of the challenges, this is where you have arrived – loving these key features of your new bathroom. I think that's a beautiful outcome.**

Me too!



### DIY TIP

To minimise condensation in the ducting and fully clear humid air, run the fan for 20 minutes after a bath or shower.

# BREATHE EASY

Keep the bathroom fresh and free of mould and mildew with these solutions for good ventilation

**WORDS** SANDRA BRIDEKIRK

PICTURE (MAIN) IXL APPLIANCES



Windows are the simplest way to ventilate a bathroom.

The bathroom is one of the most important areas of the home when it comes to ventilation. If moisture caused by steam isn't properly vented, potentially harmful mould and mildew can quickly take hold.

One of the simplest and most effective ways to remove moist air is to install an extractor fan vented to the outside via a ducting kit. Before you buy the fan, measure the area in square metres to get the right size.

Ensure the bathroom has been professionally waterproofed to prevent leaks, and use mould-inhibiting primers and paints for wet areas. >



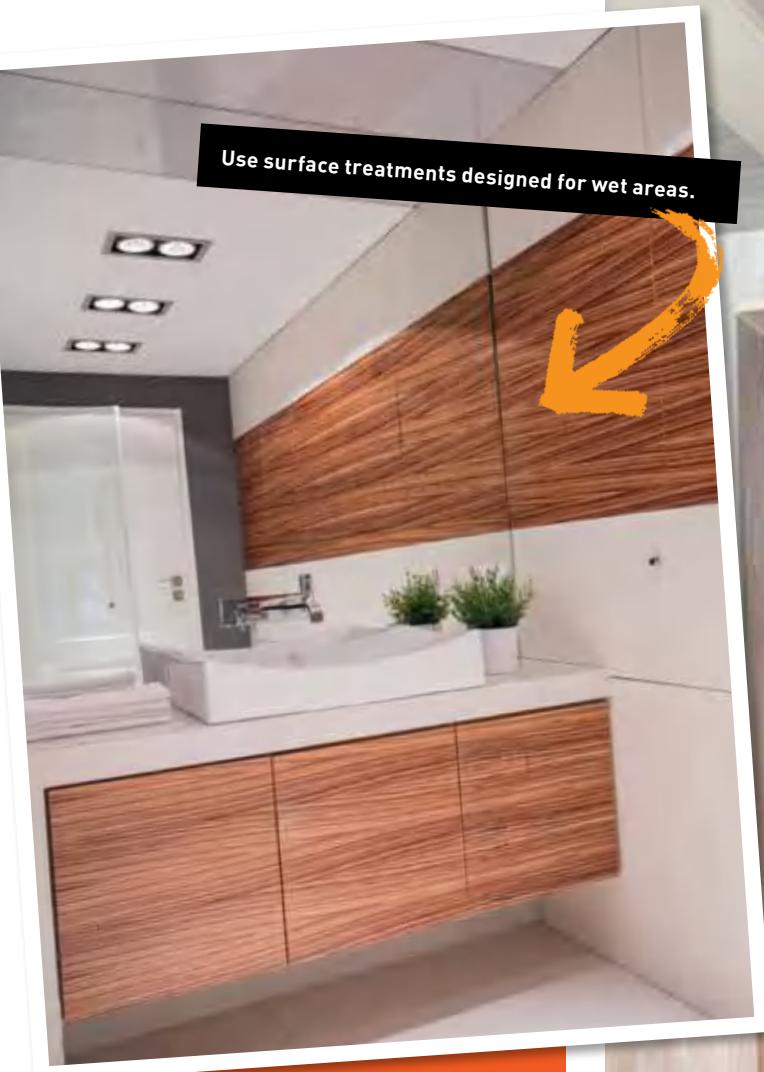
### Make-up air

Outside air that is introduced to replace extracted or vented air is called make-up air.

If possible, a window should be kept slightly open in your bathroom, so make-up air can enter. And it's important a bathroom door should not be sealed too tightly at the base.

'Underfloor heating on a timer helps with mould and mildew control, as it dries excess moisture, especially in winter,' says Natalie Andersen, director of Look Design Group.

'No longer cost prohibitive, it can be installed in an average-sized bathroom for about \$1500 and can even be done as a DIY job.'



Use surface treatments designed for wet areas.



Waterproof before tiling and use anti-mould paint.



### Safe renovating

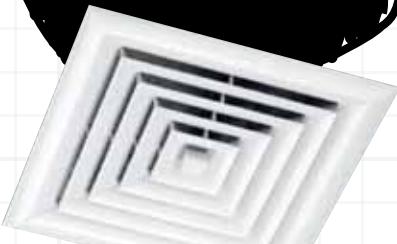
Volatile organic compounds (VOCs) are potentially harmful chemicals containing carbon that are present in new furnishings, cleaning sprays and many renovating products, such as paint, adhesives and varnishes.

The reason fresh paint and new furniture gradually lose their new smell is because the VOCs make their way to the surface and are released into the air. This 'off-gassing' lessens over time.

The Australian Government's *Your Home* guide ([yourhome.gov.au](http://yourhome.gov.au)) has the following recommendations.

- ⊕ **LOOK** for building products that are factory pre-dried or quick drying.
- ⊕ **USE** surface-coating products that are water based or classed as containing zero or low levels of VOCs.
- ⊕ **ASK** the manufacturer for the material safety data sheet (MSDS), especially if the information on the container is unclear.
- ⊕ **VENTILATE** rooms when resurfacing walls and floors until the odour reduces considerably or disappears. ⊕

## TOP PICKS



CSR Edmonds Ventilation  
Whirly Mate Ceiling Grille,  
\$70. [edmonds.com.au](http://edmonds.com.au)



DampRid Refillable Moisture  
Absorber, \$5 for 300g.  
[kendler.com.au](http://kendler.com.au)



CSR Edmonds Ventilation  
300mm Solar-powered  
Maestro Nightsky, \$842.



Selleys Rapid Mould  
Killer Spray, \$6 for 500ml.  
[selleys.com.au](http://selleys.com.au)



IXL Tastic Neo 3-in-1 Single Heat  
Lamp, Fan and Light in White,  
from \$569. [ixlappliances.com.au](http://ixlappliances.com.au)



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\$61 for 4L. [britishpaints.com.au](http://britishpaints.com.au)



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## SAFETY TIP

If tile grout is cracked or crumbling, remove and reapply it to protect the waterproof membrane underneath.

# 5 TIPS WHEN WATERPROOFING

Make the right decision when renovating wet areas of the home with these smart ways to find the best service

WORDS ASHLEIGH PERRIOTT

**W**hile it may seem like waterproofing is as easy as applying a few coats of paint, a lack of know-how and poor workmanship can lead to a hefty repair bill.

Waterproofing topped the list of the 10 most common building defects in Australia in a recent national building industry survey.

Signs of failed waterproofing are often invisible until structural damage has occurred, so it's vital to get it right the first time around. >

## GET AN EXPERT

The average cost for a professional to waterproof a bathroom is \$600, but fixing a dodgy job can cost thousands.

The experts at Sika Australia, manufacturers of building and DIY products ([sika.com.au](http://sika.com.au)), advise taking these steps before picking a tradie.

1

### Pick a professional

Search for someone who has completed a Certificate III in Construction Waterproofing through an industry body and holds a waterproofing licence issued in your home state.

This can be held by a specialist, builder or plumber, so shop around until you find the right fit.

2

### Find the finest

Keeping up to date with laws and regulations is essential, so a topnotch tradie will be a member of an industry body such as the Master Builders Association (MBA).

Call your local branch to find the qualified members near you.

Take your time researching a waterproofer's history.

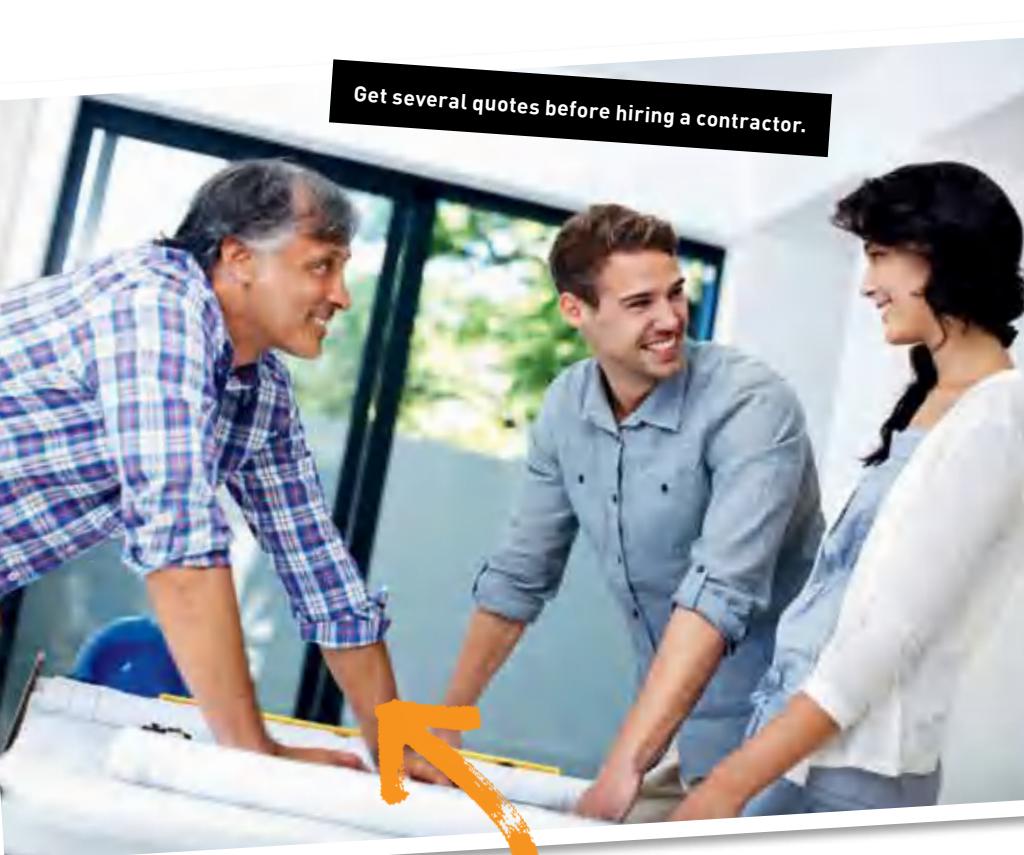


3

### Read the reviews

Find out their level of experience and request customer testimonials to ensure they have a history of quality workmanship, as well as positive relationships with past clients.





Get several quotes before hiring a contractor.

## 4 Set the standard

Discuss what standards the waterproofing work in your property will need to meet.

There are two main national standards to legally comply with, Australian Standard 3740-2010 Waterproofing of Domestic Wet Areas and/or Australian Standard 4654-2012 Waterproofing Membranes for External Above Ground Use.

Take notes and have a chat with the local MBA branch, checking their answers are up to scratch.

## 5 Get a guarantee

Like you would with any other large purchase, request a guarantee from the installer and a warranty to store in a safe place.

Errors in the application may appear years after completion and this should protect you from repair expenses in the event of damage.



Cutting corners to save costs when waterproofing is a recipe for disaster



### Can you DIY?

Regulations vary from state to state, and even between councils, with some requiring by law that waterproofing be done by a pro, so check before you DIY.

Industry organisations such as the Master Builders Association ([masterbuilders.com.au](http://masterbuilders.com.au)) have guidelines on meeting state

regulations on their website, so if you want to complete the project yourself, read up online first.

The shower area is at the highest risk of damage should work prove faulty, so all walls and floors around it need to be fully waterproofed.

Laundries and separate toilets have fewer regulations, as they provide a lower risk. ☀

 **Crommelin**

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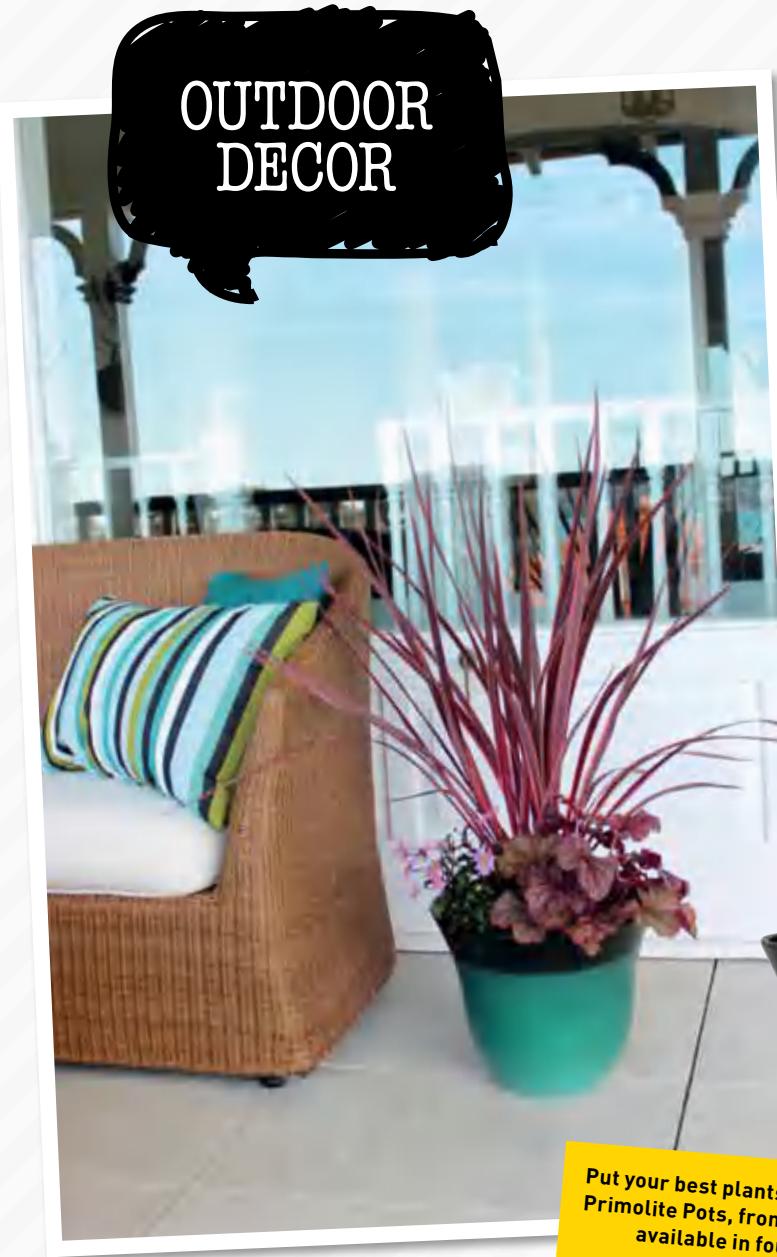
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# WHAT'S NEW

Head instore to pick up the latest products for the home and garden



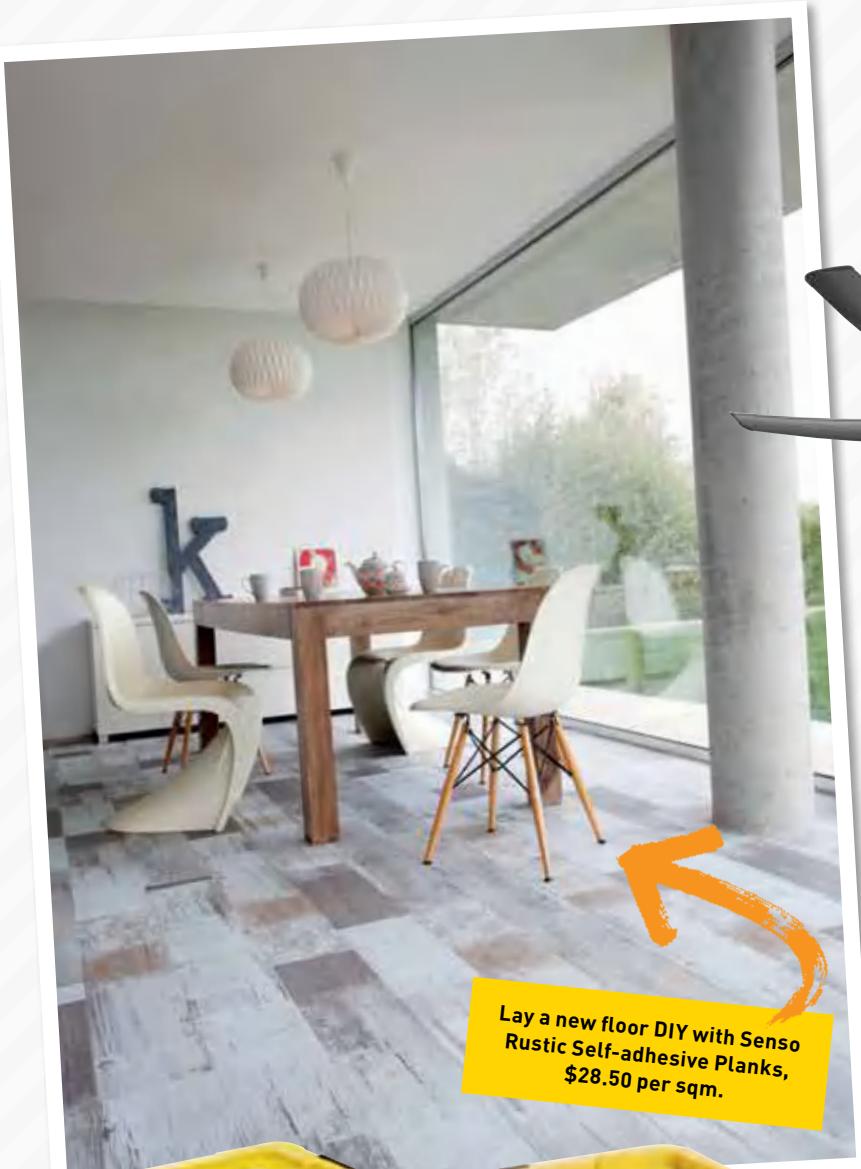
Put your best plants on show with Primolite Pots, from \$24.98 each, available in four sizes.



Find it at Bunnings

## DESIGN TIP

Choose neutral tones for outdoor furniture and surfaces so they won't date, adding colour with pots and cushions.



## HOUSEHOLD ESSENTIALS



Sync a smartphone to the speaker of an Arlec 142cm Bluetooth Ceiling Fan, \$499, to enjoy tunes and stay cool.



Warm up outdoors on autumn nights with an Electric Bar Table Heater, \$259, with 40cm glass top.



Refresh furniture fast with Rust-Oleum Universal, a paint and primer in one, \$12.95 for 312g.



Store breakables in a Heavy Duty 60L Storage Container for safekeeping, \$12.98.

Reduce clutter with a Heavy Duty 100L Black Storage Container, \$17.49.



Design a better backyard with the Crommelin Landscape range, from \$59.90 for 4L.



Tidy the yard with a lightweight Ryobi 18V Jet Blower Kit with 4.0Ah battery, \$229.



Cut back trees with a Ryobi Katana 12V Pruning Saw with two-year warranty and 1.3Ah battery, \$139.



Trim hedges with an Ozito Power X Change 18V Lithium Ion Grass Shear, \$79 skin only.

FOR YOUR INSPIRATION ►►►

# OLD & NEW

Heritage style and modern architecture combine to create a home with character

WORDS SITA SIMONS PICTURES SHANNON MCGRATH



Like many urban centres around the country, Melbourne's inner city has become a sought after place to live with high property values.

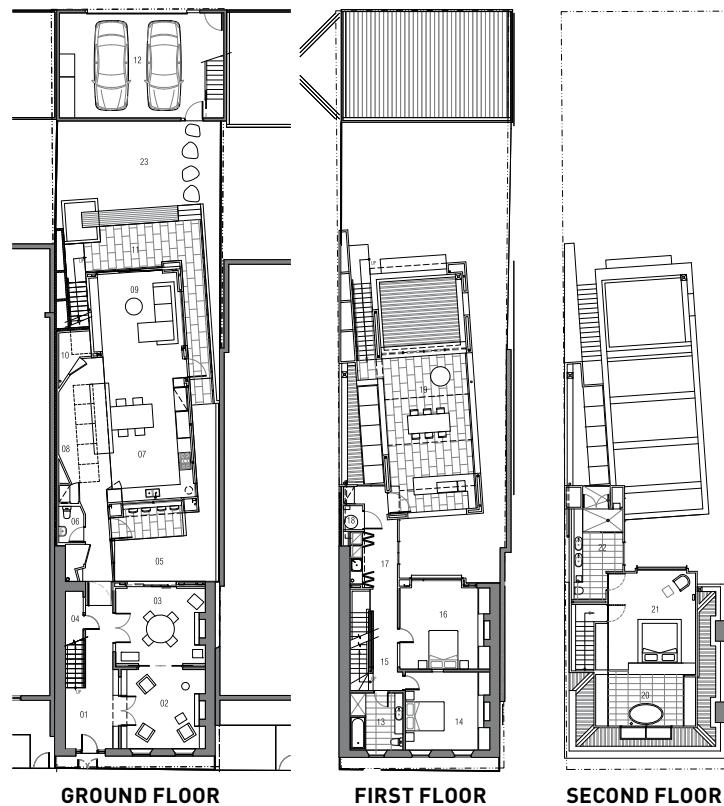
In a suburb that's typically tightly packed with long and narrow terraced houses, this 10 x 40m double-fronted Victorian home in Fitzroy stood apart.

But it wasn't too impressive to look at from the street, says architect Nick Travers of Techne Architecture + Interior Design ([techne.com.au](http://techne.com.au)).

'Partial renovations and lots of add-ons, mostly from the 1980s, gave it a dated, incoherent feel, concealing its presence and dulling its charm.'

'Past the facade, there wasn't a lot of the original fabric and detail of the house left, so this was a large-scale demolition and rebuild,' says Nick.

The clients were a couple with young kids who loved the area and wanted a contemporary design. Their goal was a home with personality and warmth, and space for entertaining. >



LEGEND	
01	ENTRY
02	LIBRARY/SITTING ROOM
03	DINING
04	STORE
05	COURTYARD
06	POWDER ROOM
07	KITCHEN
08	GALLERY
09	LIVING
10	STORE
11	OUTDOOR LIVING
12	GARAGE
13	BATHROOM
14	BED ROOM 03
15	HALL
16	BED ROOM 02
17	LAUNDRY
18	STORE
19	TERRACE
20	DRESSING ROOM/BATH
21	MAIN BEDROOM
22	ENSUITE
23	GARDEN

## DESIGN TIP

Timber was used throughout the home to add warmth in spaces with utilitarian surfaces such as concrete.

## Original restoration

Although most of the original house was demolished, referencing the era and period details is always necessary for a successful renovation.

'It is kind of an unspoken rule. I have seen renovations that didn't do it and they can feel disconnected and almost soulless,' says Nick.

'It can be jarring to think you are entering a Victorian house because of the facade and be faced with undiluted modernism inside. There's always a balance that feels right.'

Traditionally, the front rooms would have been formal reception

and living areas. The renovation played with this concept to create a comfortable home rather than stiff spaces that no-one would use.

The front rooms are separate spaces that allow for privacy and feel different from the rest of the house.

'We were going for an interpretation of old-world feel, but also something very particular to Melbourne, a winter space. These are cold-climate rooms, using darker colours, timber panelling and layers of texture,' says Nick.

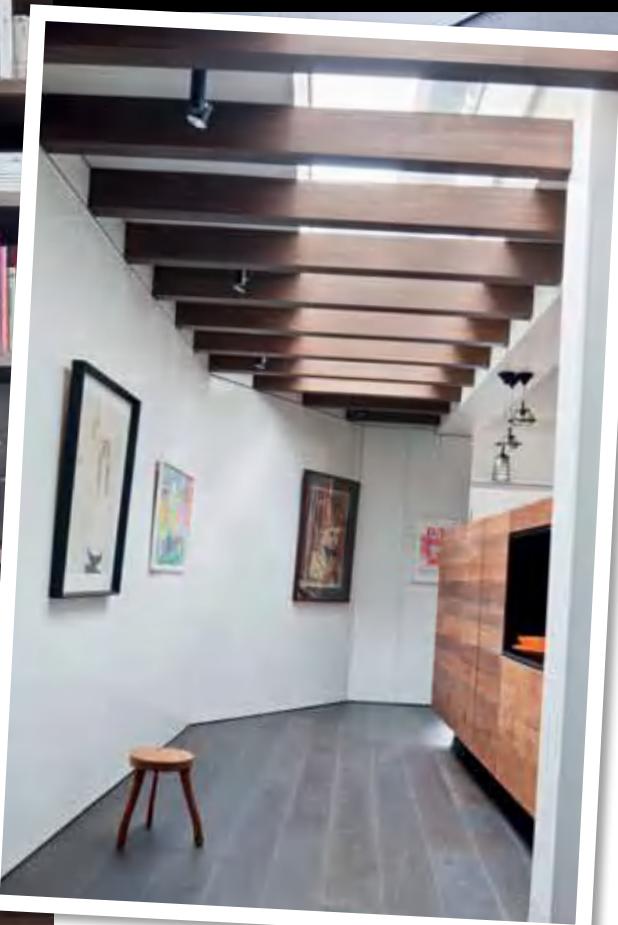
'Classic furniture shapes and rich wallpapers reflect the English styling this era of architecture would have had.'

## BUDGET TIP

Choosing the same colour scheme for every room means you can buy paint in bulk and save yourself money.



**LEFT** On entering, you are greeted by a formal sitting room-cum-library, which references the original heritage home.  
**BELLOW** A light-filled corridor links the old and the new parts of the house.





**In the family living room, the oversized sofa invites relaxation.**

### Courtyard connection

The home was renovated to become two separate structures. Behind the Victorian facade lie period-style rooms, while a modern pavilion was added at the rear of the property.

From the sitting room-cum-library, a wide corridor that doubles as gallery space leads to the new build, angling at the end to open into the pavilion.

Light floods into the corridor through a full-length skylight and is filtered by timber beams, signalling the deft design of the new build.

### Built-in joinery offers an exact customised solution for the space in the living area

A leafy open courtyard sits between the old and the new parts of the house, which is accessed via glass doors in the gallery corridor.

The courtyard acts as a transition point, bringing views, natural light and greenery into the interior of the front part of the house and rear pavilion.

The landscaping was an important element of the overall renovation.

'Because there was width in the block, a key focus was the connection between the indoors and out. The clients went to a lot of effort with the native gardens. These spaces create a sense of sanctuary,' says Nick. >



Large bifolds off the family living room bring the outdoors in.

## New pavilion

To increase the footprint of the home, the pavilion was added to house an open-plan kitchen and living area. It was skewed on an angle to create more garden space instead of building right up to the boundary lines.

Sleek and unobtrusive, the new kitchen features floor-to-ceiling storage and integrated appliances, with white cabinetry and black marble benchtops that recede into the space.

A large timber block balances the textural elements, and provides more storage space and a technology hub. A concrete table on casters can be extended or minimised.

On the other side of the servery windows, the kitchen bench extends to form a cafe-style bar that can be enjoyed from the courtyard.

Off the living area, the courtyard feature is replicated through large bifolds, offering unobstructed views.

Awning windows open from a kitchen benchtop into the courtyard, creating an outdoor bar for entertaining.

**RIGHT** The courtyard links the old and the new parts of the house.



The open-air terrace on the first floor is an entertainer's dream.

## DESIGN TIP

Install awning windows and bifolds to open up the home and provide a seamless connection with the outdoors.



A native garden can be both lush and structural but is always low maintenance

## Entertaining spaces

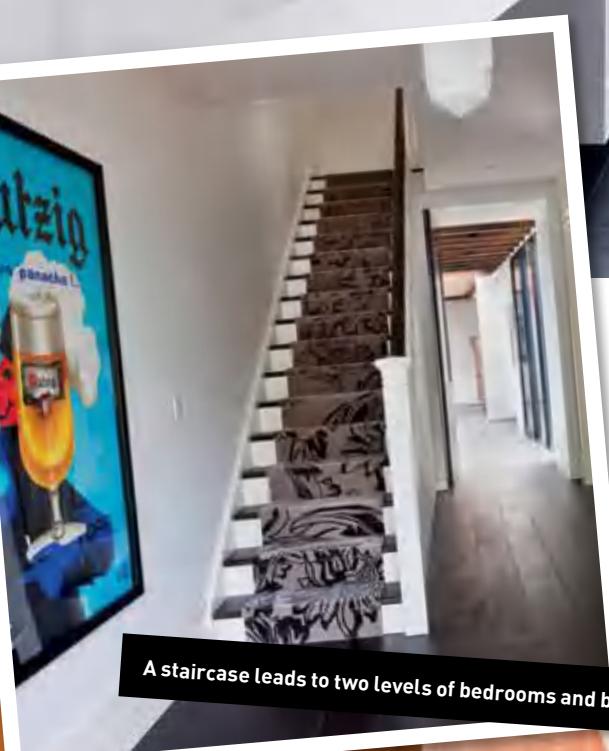
Located right above the living space and accessed by an external staircase is a large open-air terrace, which takes in views of the garden and trees and also the CBD in the distance.

This type of entertaining space was top of the owners wish-list. While still being a private space, it is big enough for parties and gatherings.

There is a visual link from the terrace to the living area via a highlight window, and the open roof structure defines and contains the space.

The warm palette of timber, in this case the cladding of Victorian ash, is continued so the outdoor spaces feel harmonious with the interior.

Recycled timber beams and exposed brickwork ground the design and give it texture. >



**Position windows and doors to give bedrooms and even bathrooms treetop or garden views**

### Leafy views

Featuring a boldly patterned runner, the staircase in the front part of the house leads you to the first floor, where there is a family bathroom and two bedrooms above the formal sitting room and library on the ground floor.

The second floor attic space was turned into the master bedroom suite, and features a wall of storage and wardrobes in the same timber that is used throughout the house. A small, private balcony brings the outdoors in.

A king-sized bed is positioned to take in the garden view through a large window, and a raised platform behind holds a freestanding tub. There is also an ensuite, unfussy and generous in size, with a moulded stone sink.

'It's so private and peaceful here. From the bathtub looking up, there is a view of the treetops, and the parapet of the original building,' says Nick.

'It's the perfect junction between the old and new parts of the house, and signifies the resolution.'

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CREATING WAVES FOR POOL SAFETY

## DESIGN TIP

Use a contrasting monochrome colour palette when updating the exterior to create a modern look.



### After

Revamping the facade and yard gives this tired home a great new look.



### Before



# FROM RUSTIC TO REMARKABLE

A fresh colour scheme and tidy landscaping turns this ramshackle ranch into a modern marvel

WORDS AND PICTURES CHERIE BARBER



 Is it a suburban home, or is it a rural ranch? I think this house is suffering from a serious identity crisis.

The random assortment of garden beds, log-style front fence and remnants of old lattice do nothing for its street appeal.

It needs structure and uniformity to make it stand out for all the right reasons.

#### The reno challenge

Beige bricks and a faded roof really date the home, so render and paint will make the biggest difference to the property.

I'll tidy up the garden, green up the lawn, remove any unnecessary and scrappy features, and add definition by laying a driveway.

A new modern mailbox will create a sense of identity, while a classic white picket fence using the existing brick pillars will finish off the renovation. ➤



Cherie Barber is the owner of Renovating For Profit, a company dedicated to teaching people how to add value to their property through smart renovation.

She is also a public speaker and TV renovator on the popular Network Ten show *The Living Room*.

Cherie is offering a free virtual makeover to *Handyman* readers in need of renovation inspiration.

Send us a photo and description of an area in your home that needs work for the chance to get a free virtual makeover.

To upload your photos, go to [handyman.net.au/virtual-makeover](http://handyman.net.au/virtual-makeover).

# SIX STEPS TO SUCCESS

## 1 RENDER THE WALLS

Nothing dates a place like bland, bare bricks, so covering them with render is first on the list.

It's not a cheap fix, but I always maintain that the amazing transformation achieved by rendering virtually guarantees your return on investment.



Rockcote PM100 Q Render, \$17 for 20kg. [rockcote.com.au](http://rockcote.com.au)

## 4 INSTALL A FENCE

With the ranch logs gone, there's space to add conventional fence palings. It's a better fit for a typical suburban neighbourhood.

I'll also install an affordable designer letterbox to give the property more character.



Sandleford Napoli Wall Mount Letterbox, \$85. [sandleford.com.au](http://sandleford.com.au)

## 2 LAY A DRIVEWAY

With no proper driveway, the house will never look finished and smart. Loose gravel looks messy and simply doesn't cut it.

A concrete driveway now connects the carport with the street, providing the missing link.



Berger Jet Dry Heavy Duty Deep Charcoal Paving Paint, about \$94 for 4L. [bergerjetdry.com.au](http://bergerjetdry.com.au)

## 5 PAINT THE HOUSE

With everything in place, it's time to nail the colour palette. A classic colour scheme is just what this home needs.

I've selected Dulux Limed White Quarter for the house and fence, contrasting with Dulux Klavier for the roof, trims, fence posts and driveway.

I'll also paint the window frames in white.

### KLAVIER

### LIMED WHITE QUARTER

Dulux Weathershield Matt White Exterior Paint, \$160 for 10L. [dulux.com.au](http://dulux.com.au)

## 3 TIDY THE GARDEN

I'll remove the old lattice from the front yard and the logs from the fence, but leave the brick posts and render them.

The garden bed by the driveway will be kept and planted with low-lying ferns. The other garden beds will be patched up with vibrant green turf.



Blechnum Dwarf Tree Fern, 200mm, \$19 from Bunnings.

## 6 ADD A SCREEN

Privacy is always an important factor to consider, so a slatted timber screen was installed at one end of the verandah.

The natural timber works well with the colour palette, adding warmth to the facade. ☀



Whites Outdoor Screen Up Side Fix Kit, 19mm x 2m, \$37. [whitesgroup.com.au](http://whitesgroup.com.au)

# Smart technology.

## Optimal power, maximum endurance.



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# ALL THINGS BENCHTOPS

Install new surfaces to transform the look and feel of your kitchen



Kaboodle Kitchen 900mm Taranade Benchtop, \$267 per linear metre.

Watch the video 'How to Install a Laminate Benchtop' at [bunnings.com.au/diy-advice](http://bunnings.com.au/diy-advice)

**A** full budget-blowing renovation isn't the only solution to the problem of living with a dated kitchen.

If the layout is practical and the cabinetry in good shape, you can give the kitchen a refresh instead of an overhaul. And the quickest way to do this is by replacing the benchtops.

Here are some of the hottest benchtop trends currently available in laminate, stone, timber and bamboo.

Your choice will depend on the existing cabinetry and overall look of the room, as well as your budget.

**TIP** Install new cabinetry handles for another instant, budget upgrade.



## LAMINATE

The ideal choice if you're after a quick kitchen refresh, laminate benchtops are available in a huge variety of styles, colours and patterns.

A very budget-friendly option when compared to stone, laminate is also easy to install and maintain, making it the best choice if you want to replace the benchtops DIY.



You can go for plain benchtops in the colour of your choice, or opt for laminate that has the appearance of textured timber or high-end stone so you can get the designer look for less.

Depending on the style and the colour, laminate benchtops come in a gloss or matt finish, and in a range of sizes and profiles. >



AUSTRALIAN

# handyman

NEXT ISSUE

On sale 24 March

## GARDEN

Plant daffodils, tulips and hyacinths now for a big spring bulb display.

**PLUS** Grow the best winter vegetables.

## OUTDOOR

Install a timber boundary fence in just a weekend, step by step.

**PLUS** Add a playground to the yard for the kids.

## DECORATE

Paint walls like a pro with our ultimate list of dos and don'ts.

**PLUS** Upcycle old furniture to save money.

## DESIGN TIP

Bamboo features a beautiful natural grain and is a great eco-friendly substitute for stained timber.



**ABOVE** Bamboo teams well with dark grey shades for an eye-catching look.  
**RIGHT** Measure up carefully before buying new benchtops, then again before installing them DIY.



## TIMBER AND BAMBOO

A great way to add warmth and life to a kitchen, natural timber and bamboo benchtops bring a beautifully organic look and feel.

Timber benchtops can be made from a variety of hardwoods, including Victorian ash, European oak and beech.

### Measure up

- 1 Check the cabinets are level and square by placing a spirit level on top of the base cabinets. If they're not, adjust them as necessary.
- 2 Measure the length of the kitchen, remembering to include all filler and end panels. It is best to start from a wall and measure outwards. Add 20mm for the overhang or 30mm where safety corners are used.
- 3 Measure the depth of the benchtop from the wall to the front of the cabinet doors and drawers. >

## DIY TIP

Check the thickness of your old benchtop before replacing it to avoid leaving any gaps when installing the new one.



## STONE

If you're after an alternative to timber, bamboo or laminate, stone is a great option. There is a range of natural and engineered stone benchtops available, designed to suit varying budgets, styles and tastes.

Natural stone comes in various colours and patterns, blending beauty with durability and is an enduring investment in any kitchen. Stone is also great for alfresco kitchens.

Engineered stone is produced using a mix of 96% natural quartz and technologically advanced polymers, making it a non-porous, hard-wearing material. It's also easy to maintain and can come with a 10-year warranty. ☀





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# LIVING THE DREAM

How one couple transformed a sandstone cottage into a Japanese-inspired guesthouse

WORDS GUN ARVIDSEN PICTURES LINDA EVANS



After stepping inside this peaceful guesthouse, it's hard to believe you're in a busy inner-Sydney suburb.



Guests are provided with Japanese footwear and clothing to make the experience authentic. **LEFT** The sandstone walls are all that remain of the original property.



**C**rossing the threshold into Ryokan Gojyuan, located in Sydney's Balmain, is like stepping through a magical portal and being instantly transported to Japan.

'We've always had a love affair with Japan, but it was never in my mind to open something like this, it just happened,' says Linda Evans, owner of the guesthouse ([ryokangojyuan.com](http://ryokangojyuan.com)).

Linda and her husband, Steve, visited Japan in 2001 and they were inspired by the hospitality they enjoyed while staying in traditional Japanese guesthouses, called ryokan.

'We thought it would be nice to have something like that in Australia, so people could see what hospitality is supposed to be about,' she says.

Despite being an IT professional by trade, Linda has a strong practical background in DIY, as does Steve.

'I had a vision and we managed to find a local builder to work with, who was the best help we could have wished for on this project,' she says.

The reno was a huge undertaking, involving major excavation work and a substantial rebuild of the property.

The transformation took five years to complete. Linda acted as project manager and maintained her sanity by focusing only on the job at hand.

'When we were doing the roof, I forgot about everything else. If I had looked at the overall project, I probably wouldn't be sitting here talking about it today,' she says. >



The minimalist use of space is key when setting out a Japanese-style room

## Seizing opportunities

Despite the various challenges, many unexpected opportunities surfaced as the work progressed, making the process rewarding and enjoyable.

'I was going to use bamboo around the pond so I bought several books on the subject, but then this redwood came up on eBay. I thought it was lovely so we got that instead, and it changed things completely,' says Linda.

The cedar used for the front door was also an online find.

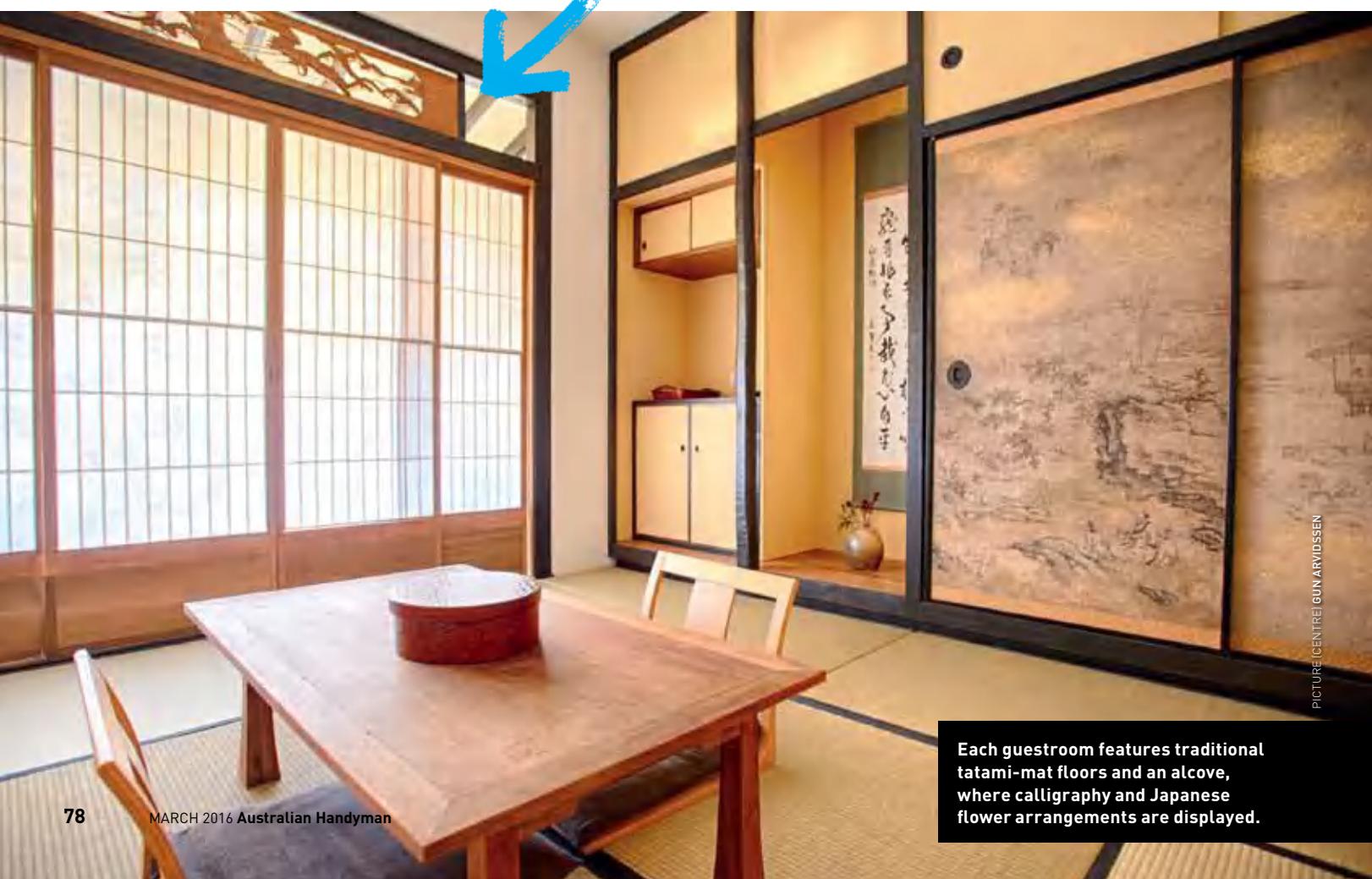
'It was once part of a house in Mosman and now it's a door in Balmain. I love the idea that the timber has another history,' she says.

'The process made me think of a flowing river. It turns and turns, and you really never know what's going to happen.'

Taking advantage of all the opportunities allowed Linda and Steve to create a ryokan whose authenticity resonates in every detail.



Most of the accessories are sourced from Japan.  
**BELow** The intricately carved transoms, called ranma, are from a Japanese antique dealer.



PICTURE (CENTRE) GUNARVIDSEN

Each guestroom features traditional tatami-mat floors and an alcove, where calligraphy and Japanese flower arrangements are displayed.



The verandah of the Pine Room, or Matsunoma, opens onto the exquisitely created traditional garden.

### Attention to detail

The furniture, decorations and crockery are sourced from Japan or local secondhand dealers.

'We set out the two guestrooms as traditionally as possible. Each features a tokonoma, an alcove where ikebana (Japanese flower arrangements) or calligraphy pieces are displayed,' says Linda.

But beneath the surface of the perfectly executed decor lies a high-tech infrastructure.

'I'm an IT programmer, so right from the very start I wanted to use cutting-edge technology,' says Linda.

'My office is located upstairs and everything is star-wired from there.'

Track lighting systems have been cleverly integrated into the cladding of the structural beams in the dining room and lobby area.

The guestrooms and bathhouse feature concealed sound systems that play soft and soothing Japanese background music on demand. >

Lightweight sliding doors conceal a lavishly appointed bathroom in each guestroom.





Behind the majestic bathtub, multi-fold windows open onto a garden featuring a lovely camellia, with privacy ensured by slatted timber screening.

### Soaking in style

The star attraction of Gojyuan is the bathhouse. The bath is a spectacular focal point, with the exotic fragrance of water-warmed hinoki timber creating a dreamlike atmosphere.

'We were originally going to have a slate bath because we couldn't really afford anything else, then the opportunity arose for us to provide something better, and hinoki timber was the obvious choice,' says Linda.

The bath was custom-built by a Japanese company called Hinoki Soken, and on a trip to Japan, Linda and Steve visited the factory.

'One of my fondest memories was seeing a Japanese artisan hand-planing a circular bath. The planes are so finely tuned that each shave is translucent. It's just beautiful,' she says.

'Once the timber has been planed, you don't even have to sand it, as the finish is already superb.' >



Japanese baths are designed for soaking and relaxing rather than cleansing the body



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A pond filled with ornamental koi fish meanders through the grounds.



### Serene and green

One of the most noticeable qualities of Gojyuan is the sense of calm, and nowhere is this feeling more pervasive than in the meticulously crafted garden.

'The sound of running water is very peaceful, and it was always going to be a major part of the garden,' says Linda.

The groundcovers and feature plants make it hard to believe you're in Sydney, despite the locally sourced sandstone.

'Outside the back guestroom, which faces south, the moss is really coming on. In Japan, moss is everywhere.'

'We have a lot of Japanese maples, and the idea is to highlight the change of seasons, even if Sydney is a little too temperate for us to really gain the fullest autumn tones,' she says.

While any Australian visitor is sure to be awestruck by Gojyuan, there is a higher seal of approval that Linda is particularly proud of.

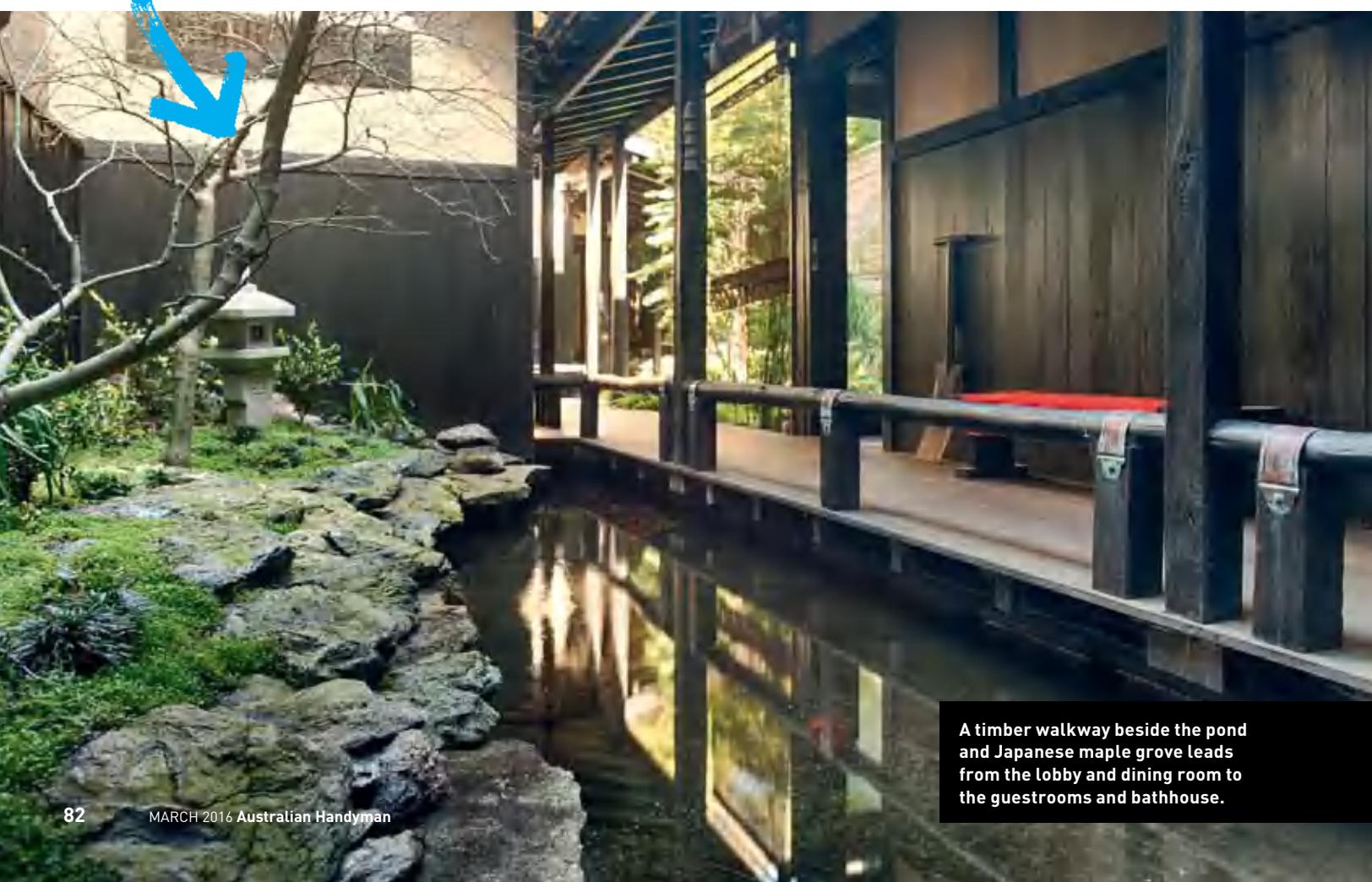
'An elderly lady visited us once, an experienced tea person, dressed in a kimono. She said, "When I heard this place was run by an Aussie, I was expecting something totally different. But this is like my home in Kyoto."

'To me, that's the best compliment I could receive, as it means she could see what's gone into it. And that's us, and our passion for Japan,' says Linda.

It takes vision and perseverance to create a space that can pass such a test of authenticity, but as Linda has shown, it is a completely achievable prospect, even without a massive budget. ☈

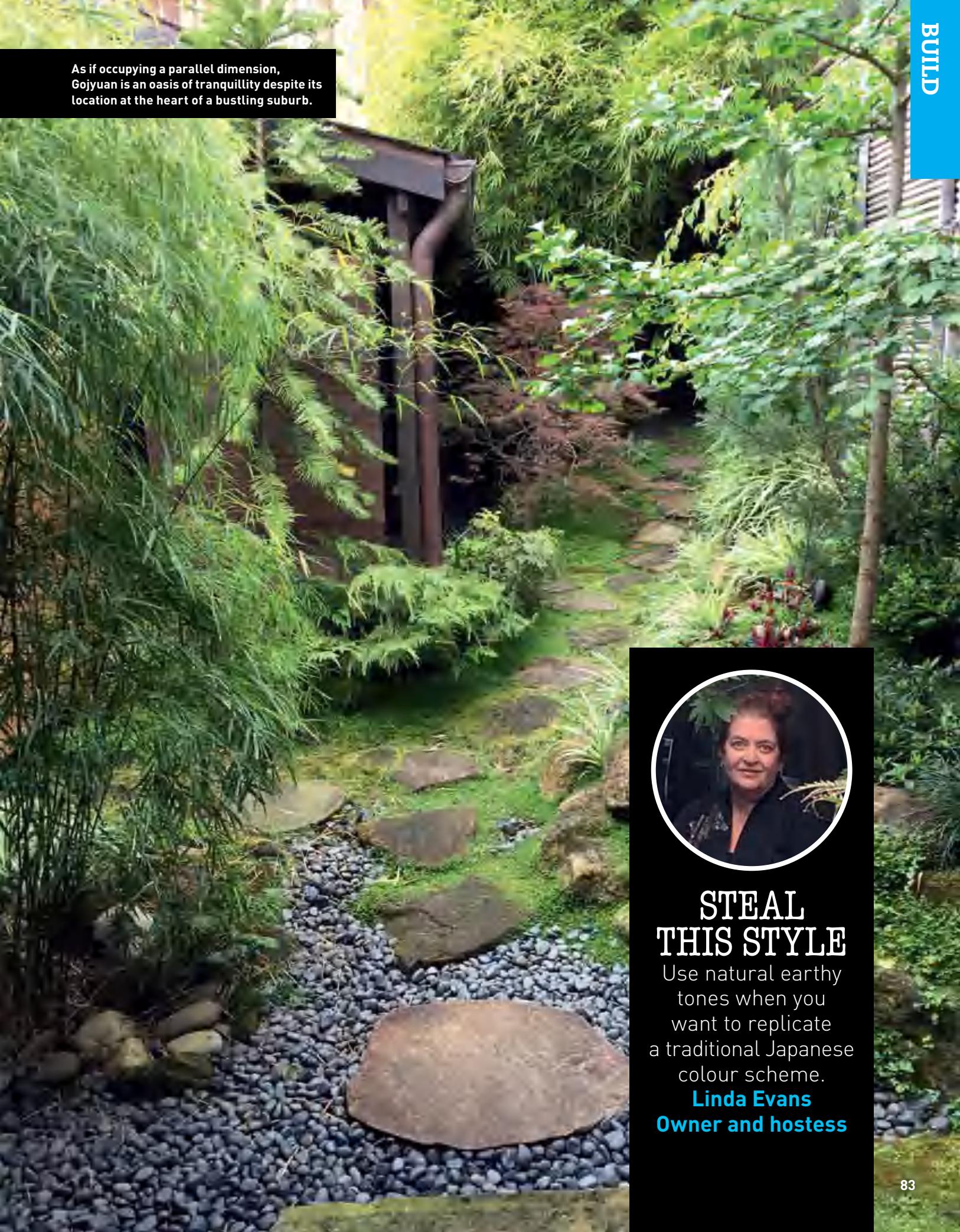


**The use of running water is an essential way to imbue a space with serenity**



A timber walkway beside the pond and Japanese maple grove leads from the lobby and dining room to the guestrooms and bathhouse.

As if occupying a parallel dimension, Gojyuan is an oasis of tranquillity despite its location at the heart of a bustling suburb.



## STEAL THIS STYLE

Use natural earthy tones when you want to replicate a traditional Japanese colour scheme.

**Linda Evans**  
**Owner and hostess**



## DESIGN TIP

When choosing a door colour, consider the style of your home as well as the look of other houses on your street.

# Bold doors

Transform your entrance with paint to create a stunning first impression

WORDS DANIEL BUTKOVICH

**T**here is no renovating technique that offers more bang for your buck than painting.

It's a simple and easy way to transform both the interior and exterior of the home, and it's well within the skill level of any DIYer.

Plus, you don't need to paint the whole house to change the look.

Painting the front door is a fun way to add colour to the exterior, and gives a home instant character.

The hardest part is choosing the colour, but happily there is a shade to suit every architectural style.

**TIP** Bold colours are best for external doors, as bright sunlight can make lighter shades appear faded. >

## WHAT YOU NEED



Dulux Aquanamel Deep Base Gloss Enamel Paint, \$70 for 2L. [dulux.com.au](http://dulux.com.au)



Monarch 130mm Doors, Trims & Cupboards Roller Kit, \$10. [austbrush.com.au](http://austbrush.com.au)

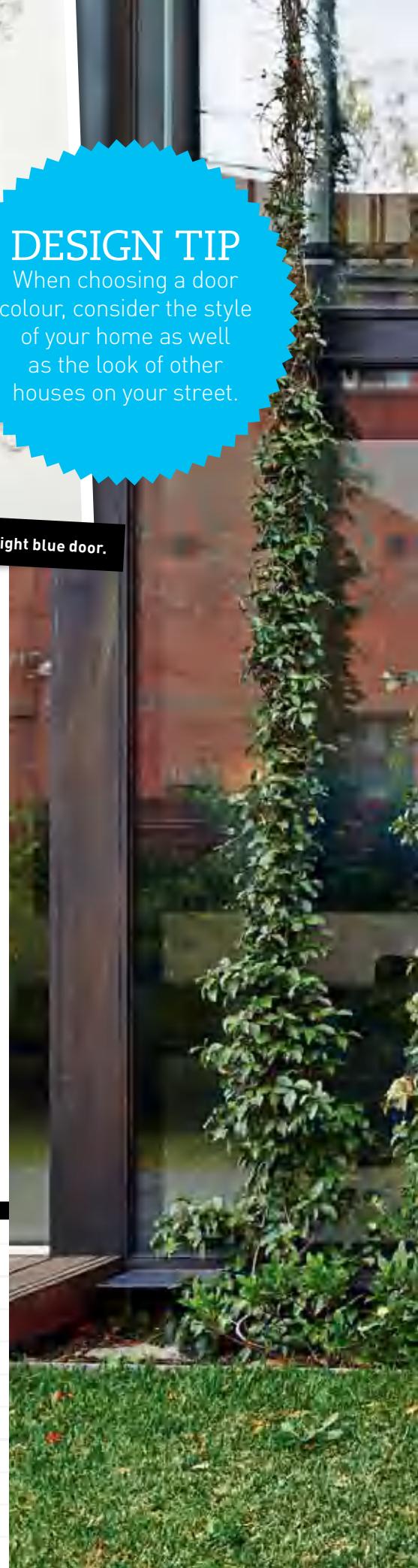




IMAGE SUPPLIED BY DULUX

A coloured door on a modern home can liven up a minimalist monochrome exterior.

Get more inspiration from the entire range of Dulux colours at [dulux.com.au/colour-wall](http://dulux.com.au/colour-wall)



Easter weekend  
DIY inspiration

## DIY TIP

Use a good-quality brush to paint any grooves or trim first, then coat the flat surfaces of the door with a roller.



These black French doors frame the garden views, bringing the greenery inside and making it the focal point.

Pastels work in period homes with an all-white scheme.

## Paint palette

Even with all the thousands of paint colours out there, most of us still go for a shade of white on walls.

The easiest way to inject colour into your interior is by painting the doors, whether you want them to blend in or stand out as features.

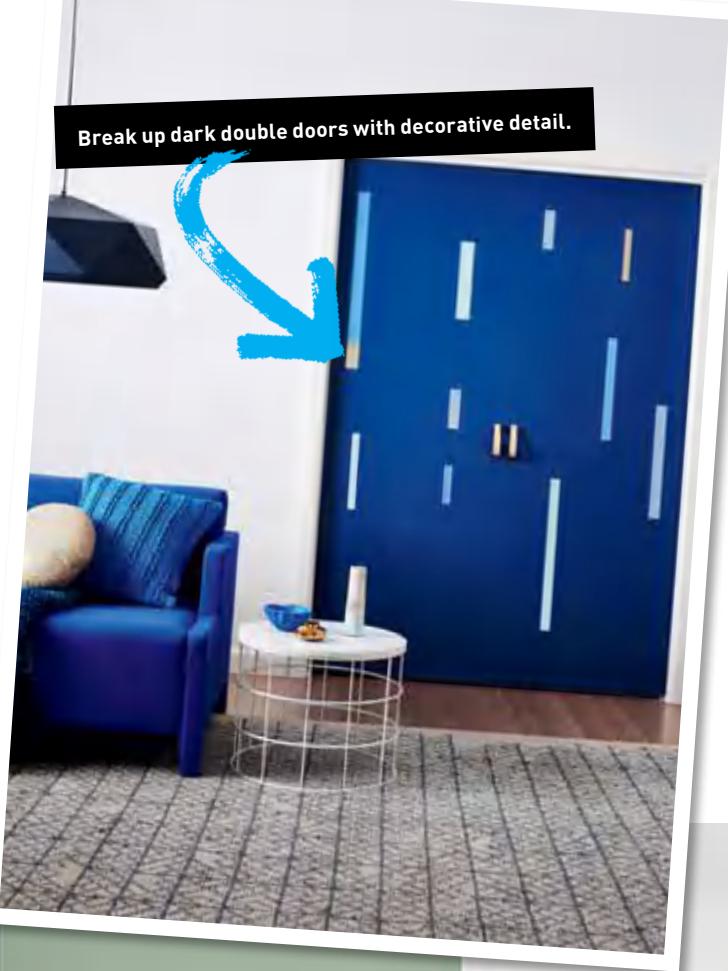
For a complementary scheme, select colours based on the existing elements in a room such as furniture and artwork. But for visual effect, use a colour that pops against the walls.

Test colours in the space using sample pots, as paint can look different to the swatch, and colours can change depending on the lighting conditions and the undercoat of the surface. ↗



The same colour can look different under natural, fluorescent, or halogen lighting





Break up dark double doors with decorative detail.



For a seamless look,  
paint the frame, jamb  
and wall around a glass  
door the same colour.



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#### ...::: PLUS Passage Mode

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# DOOR UPGRADE

Revamp an entry for a new look and to boost security

WORDS DANIEL BUTKOVICH

**M**odernising the doors in your home can be a simple and cost-effective way to create a fresh, new look while improving privacy and security.

Designer doors create a great first impression upon entry and help reinforce the style of the home.

Replacing a door, repainting an existing one or installing new handles can all be done DIY. >



For an instant impact on a budget, repaint the door and add new handles

WHAT  
YOU NEED



Ryobi Wood and Metal Door Lock Installation Kit, \$30. [ryobi.com.au](http://ryobi.com.au)



Create a great first impression with an updated door.



Taubmans Easycoat Doors & Trim Interior Gloss White Paint, \$65 for 4L. [taubmans.com.au](http://taubmans.com.au)



Bosch PSR 18 Li-2 Ergo Cordless Drill, \$229. [bosch.com.au](http://bosch.com.au)

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# CHOOSE A DOOR



Corinthian Doors Moda  
Internal Door, 2040 x 820 x 35mm,  
\$235. [corinthian.com.au](http://corinthian.com.au)



Hume Denmark Internal  
Door, 2040 x 820 x 35mm,  
\$58. [humedoors.com.au](http://humedoors.com.au)

## INTERIOR

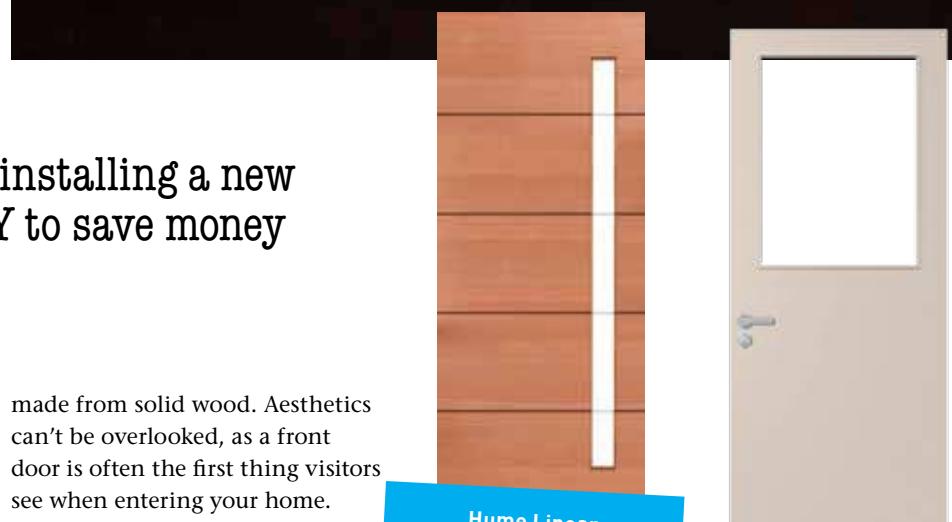
The entrance to a room sets the mood, so an interior door should enhance the look of your space.

Interior doors can be basic to provide a blank slate for paint that matches your colour scheme. They're also available in a range of panelled designs to suit the style of your home.

Most interior doors feature a hollow-core construction and are 35mm thick. The standard size of a door is 2040 x 820mm, but suppliers can provide them in other sizes.



**H** Find out how to paint a door  
Watch the video [handyman.net.au/door-paint](http://handyman.net.au/door-paint)



## EXTERIOR

With years of exposure to wind, rain and harsh sunlight, exterior doors can end up looking faded and weathered.

Luckily, it's simple to swap your door for a modern model that will withstand the elements.

Exterior doors must be stronger than interior models, and most are

made from solid wood. Aesthetics can't be overlooked, as a front door is often the first thing visitors see when entering your home.

Glass panels allow light to enter the home while adding character, and they can also be frosted for additional privacy. >

Hume Linear  
Entrance Door,  
2040 x 820 x 40mm, \$487.

Corinthian Doors  
Clear Glass Back Door,  
2040 x 820 x 35mm, \$152.

## ADD NEW HANDLES

Lane Indigo Brushed Satin Chrome Round 65mm Passage Leverset, \$36. [itwproline.com.au](http://itwproline.com.au)

Lemaar Braga Chrome Plate Privacy Set, \$44. [lemaar.com.au](http://lemaar.com.au)

## INTERIOR

Sometimes, all it takes to modernise a room is a new door handle. It's surprising how much of an impact it can make, especially when paired with a new coat of paint.

Door furniture complements the architecture of your home. Matching the clean lines of a new door with sleek steel handles creates a cohesive, modern look.

**TIP** Interior handles with locks can add privacy to bedrooms.



Lockwood Nexion Keyless Entry Lockset, \$299. [lockweb.com.au](http://lockweb.com.au)



Lockwood 001 Keyless Digital Deadlatch, \$320.

Lane Indigo Brushed Satin Chrome Single Cylinder Entry Lockset, \$144.



Gainsborough Double Cylinder Matt Black Trilock, \$210. [gainsboroughhardware.com.au](http://gainsboroughhardware.com.au)



Find out how to install a new handle  
Visit [handyman.net.au/new-door-handle](http://handyman.net.au/new-door-handle)

## EXTERIOR

Exterior handles need to be more robust to provide additional security.

Technological advances have revolutionised these handles, with convenient features like electronic keypads, remote controls and fingerprint recognition becoming standard inclusions.

These increased security features improve home safety, and modern designs protect your home without making it look like a fortress.

# SECURITY DOORS

It's worth considering a security door when replacing an old screen door, as it adds an extra layer of defence against intruders yet still allows airflow.

Steel doors are the strongest, while aluminium mesh is lightweight and less prone to corrosion. One-way security mesh adds privacy, letting you see out, but preventing others from looking in.

**TIP** Ensure your security door meets Australian Standard AS 5039-2008.



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# INSTALL A DOOR

If you're replacing an internal door or hanging a new one, mounting it to the jamb is an easy DIY job.

First, test-fit the door in the frame and check that there is at least 2mm clearance at the top and sides.

If the door is too wide or tall, trim it on the hinge side or from the base, using a power planer.

## What you need

- Internal door
- Drill and drill bits
- Tape measure
- Wedges
- Hammer
- Hinges and screws



Panelled doors suit both modern and traditional homes.

Watch the video 'How to Hang a Door' at [bunnings.com.au/diy-advice](http://bunnings.com.au/diy-advice)

1 2 3



### 1 Attach the hinges

Mark the position of the hinges on the edge of the door 200mm from the top and 300mm from the base. Drill pilot holes and attach the hinge with screws. **TIP** If the hinges need to be recessed, score the outline with a knife, then use a sharp chisel to remove the waste.

### 2 Fit the door

Position the door perpendicular to the frame. Level the door using wedges, ensuring there is 2mm clearance at the top and the hinges are sitting square on the jamb. Drive the top screw into the top hinge, check for level and adjust wedges as required.

### 3 Hang the door

Once the door is level, drive the top screw into the lower hinge. Remove the wedges and check the door shuts properly. If it doesn't, remove the lower screw, adjust the wedges, then reattach. Secure the hinges with the remaining screws when the door hangs flush.



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## INTERNAL DOORS



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# Refit the garage

Banish clutter in this multifunctional area by introducing simple storage solutions to keep tools and equipment tidy

The garage can easily become a cluttered mess if tools and gardening equipment aren't stored away properly. But it is simple and quick to turn the garage into a functional workshop.

A range of solutions are available to free up floorspace, such as shelves, cabinets and workbenches, all essential for effective decluttering.

- 1 ROMAK 1830 Series Key-lockable Metal Cabinet, \$249.
- 2 ROMAK 1830 Series Large Five-tier Shelving Unit, \$164.
- 3 ROMAK 1830 Series Medium Five-tier Shelving Unit, \$99.
- 4 ROMAK 1830 Series Five-tier Corner Unit, \$169.
- 5 EZY STORAGE 20L Bunker Heavy Duty Storage Tub, \$13.99.

- 6 ROMAK Garage Storage Four-door Mobile Drawer, \$310.
- 7 ROMAK Garage Storage Workbench, \$279.
- 8 ROMAK Garage Storage Pegboard & Bracket Set, \$185.
- 9 ROMAK Garage Storage Two-door Mobile Drawer, \$215.
- 10 ROMAK Garage Storage Large Two-door Cabinet, \$349.



1 ROMAK Heavy Duty Series Workbench, \$129.  
2 ROMAK Heavy Duty Series Four-tier Shelving Unit, \$229.  
3 EZY STORAGE 80L Bunker Heavy Duty Storage Tub, \$34.99.



Hang frequently used tools on a pegboard behind the workbench for ease of access

# RAISED VEGIE BED

1 DAY

\$222 COST

Use timber sleepers to create a simple no-dig patch for growing edibles

PROJECT AND PICTURES ADAM WOODHAMS

**A**utumn is a great time to start growing vegetables but, even with the cooler weather, digging a patch can be a chore.

We built and planted a raised 2.4 x 1.2m garden bed in just a day using timber sleepers and metal posts. Holes had to be dug for the posts, but the sleepers were then simply slotted in.

This bed was for growing edibles, so we chose a location that received at

least 4-5 hours of direct sunlight a day and wasn't exposed to a lot of wind.

Herbs and annual flowers could be grown instead of vegies, but if you're planning to use the bed for other types of plants, choose a site with sun levels that suit the species being used.

The best thing about this project is that you only need basic skills and tools, and you can plant seedlings to get a jump-start on your crops. >

## ADAM'S PICKS



Coolaroo 5m Prepacked Weed Control Mat, \$5. [coolaroo.com](http://coolaroo.com)



Carter Holt Harvey Ironwood 2.4m x 200 x 50mm Sienna sleepers, \$15 each. [chh.com](http://chh.com)



Buildex 14-10 x 100mm Climacoat Bugle Head Batten Timber Screws, \$18 for 25. [buildex.com.au](http://buildex.com.au)



Ryobi Airwave Wide Crown Stapler, \$69. [ryobi.com.au](http://ryobi.com.au)



Whites Outdoor 450 x 50mm Retain-iT Corner Post, about \$20. [whitesgroup.com.au](http://whitesgroup.com.au)



Before

## Materials

Hardwood sleepers	\$68
Metal corner posts	\$81
Quick-set concrete	\$28
Hex head timber screws	\$4
Bugle timber screws	\$16
Weedmat	\$5
Lucerne hay	\$20
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$222</b>

## SAFETY TIP

Use ACQ-treated pine or new untreated hardwood for a vegie or herb bed, not salvaged railway sleepers or CCA treated pine.

## After

Planted with vegetables, the bed has turned an unused corner into a productive space.

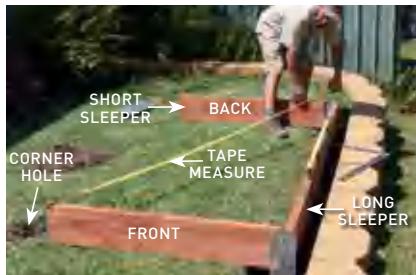


Watch Adam build this vegie bed  
Head to [handyman.net.au/raised-garden](http://handyman.net.au/raised-garden)

Easter weekend  
DIY inspiration



# BUILD THE RAISED BED



## 1 Set out the corners

Dig the first corner post hole to about 200mm deep and drop in a post. Add the concrete, checking for plumb. Slide an uncut 2400mm sleeper into the post, using this to mark the location for the second post hole, then dig the hole.



## 2 Measure the diagonals

Add the second corner post to the new hole, keeping it plumb, then pour in the concrete. Cut a 2400mm sleeper in half and slot into the corner posts. Measure the diagonals, adjusting the short sleepers until they are equal.



## 3 Install the posts

Mark and dig the last two post holes. Position the corner posts in the holes, then slot the final long sleeper in between them. Check for plumb and level before pouring concrete to secure the corner posts in position.



## 4 Secure the sleepers

Mark 20-30mm from the top edge on each face of the metal corner posts and 100mm below this mark. Predrill two holes on each face using a 4mm bit. Secure the sleepers to the posts using 12g x 25mm hex head screws.



## 5 Lay the weedmat

Cut weedmat to about 400mm wide, then cut two strips to 1200mm long and two strips to 2400mm long. Use a stapler to secure the weedmat to the short and long sleepers about 40mm down from the top edges.



## 6 Add a cross brace

Cut a sleeper to 1200mm long. Find the centre of the bed and mark the long sleepers, position the cross brace and secure to the long sleepers using 10-14g x 100mm bugle screws to prevent the long sleepers bowing.



## 7 Lay the newspaper

Ensure the weedmat is pulled out over the grass and not folded back. Lightly wet sheets of newspaper by dunking them in a bucket of water, then lay about 8-10 sheets to cover all of the exposed areas of the bed.

## 8 Fill with soil

Add the soil to the garden bed, filling it almost to the top. Use just over half a cubic metre of soil for a bed this size.

**TIP** The most economical way of buying soil for a job like this is to order it from a landscape supplier.

## 9 Plant the vegies

Prepare the soil, then plant the vegies, watering and mulching well. Add stakes to plants such as tomatoes at planting time to avoid root damage later on, securing your new plants to their stakes with budding tape.

## LAWN BORDER

Securing weedmat to the sleepers around the border of the raised bed works as a long-term barrier to any grass that may start to creep in from the surrounding lawn.

Laying newspaper across the rest of the bed base smothers the grass and prevents it from rising into the bed. Paper breaks down into useful organic material in about three months.

**TIP** An organic mulch such as lucerne hay also adds nutrients to the soil.



For a set-and-forget garden bed, install a drip-irrigation system with a timer before planting

HARVEST FOR LONGER

Succession planting is a great way to stretch what may normally be a 2-3 week harvest period out to 2-3 months.

Tomatoes are a great choice for smart succession planting. Simply plant seedlings, semi-advanced plants and advanced plants at the same time, or plant second and third rounds of seedlings 3-4 weeks apart. ☀

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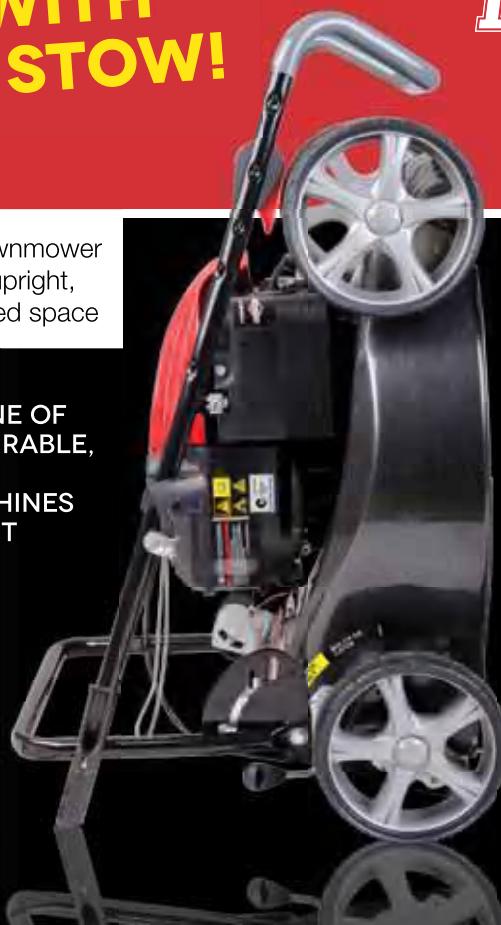
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# MULCH ESSENTIALS

Here's the easy way to win the war on weeds and save water in the garden

WORDS AND PICTURES ADAM WOODHAMS



Mix river pebbles, crushed quartz and bark mulches for a landscape with visual interest.

**C**ost effective, sustainable and great looking, mulch is a must for any garden, with the many benefits far outweighing the cost and minimal time it takes to lay it.

Mulching saves water by reducing evaporation and runoff, prevents soil erosion from wind and water, and provides insulation, keeping plant roots at a more stable temperature.

You can use organic mulches such as sugar cane that break down and add nutrients to the soil, or go for inorganic types such as pebbles that last longer and have more of a design aesthetic.

All types suppress weeds and make any that do pop up easier to remove.



## EXPERT SECRETS

Buying mulch in bulk from a local supplier saves money when mulching a larger yard.

# HOW MUCH DO YOU NEED?

Garden mulch is available to buy by the bag, the bale or in bulk.

If you're using mulch comprised of organic materials, you'll need enough for a layer about 50mm deep. For pebbles or gravels, you'll need enough to get quality coverage, which varies with the material size.

When applying, don't push mulch up against trunks or stems as this can lead to rot and insect attack.

The area they are intended to cover is indicated on most bags or bales of organic mulch, but you first need to know your surface area.

This is as simple as measuring length by breadth, so a 4 x 5m bed will have a surface area of 20sqm.

When buying mulch in bulk from a landscape supplier, you have to order it by the cubic metre.

To calculate the cubic volume, multiply the surface area by the depth, in our case 50mm. For a 20sqm bed, the volume needed will be one cubic metre ( $20 \times 0.05 = 1$ ).

If you remember that one cubic metre covers 20sqm, you will be able to estimate the amount of mulch that you need in no time. >



Laying mulch is the garden equivalent of giving the house a fresh coat of paint

## ADAM'S PICKS



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Whites Outdoor Weed Mat Pins, \$11 for 20.  
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# TYPES OF MULCH

## Organic varieties

Natural materials such as pine bark or leaf compost are called organic mulch, as they add nutrients and feed the soil as they gradually break down.

But to break down harder bark or woodchips, micro-organisms borrow the nitrogen in soil that plants need for healthy growth. To stop nitrogen drawdown, lay composted manure or lucerne hay under these mulch types.



Pine bark,  
or tan bark,  
is one of the  
longest-lasting  
mulches



### 1 Pine bark

These mulches or nuggets are available in a range of sizes and will take 18-24 months before they need replenishing. Pine bark will induce nitrogen drawdown.



### 2 Woodchips

Sold under names such as cypress, eucalyptus or hardwood, woodchips are very long lasting, but they suffer the most from nitrogen drawdown problems.



### 3 Soft fall

A fine pine bark mulch that is partially composted, soft fall is ideal for children's play areas due to its softness. It is generally only available in bulk.



### Inorganic varieties

Pebbles or gravels, available to buy bagged or in bulk, are generally described as inorganic mulches.

These mulches are long lasting and decorative, and only needed to be topped up every few years.

They do the same job as organic mulches with water-saving and weed control, but won't break down or add organic matter or nutrients to soil.

**1 RIVER PEBBLES** range in size from 5-10mm pea gravel to large rocks. The most common for mulching are 20 or 40mm sizes.

**2 QUARTZ PEBBLES** come in colours from blue-white to gold. They don't absorb as much heat, helping to keep the soil cooler.

**3 CRUSHED TERRACOTTA** looks like red-quarried gravel and is

made from salvaged materials that are crushed and graded.

**4 CRUSHED QUARTZ** is available in a few different colours, including crisp white. It has the appearance of a gravel due to being crushed.

**5 SCORIA** is red volcanic rock that is much lighter than other inorganic mulches. It is not recommended in areas where it may be walked on. ➤



### 4 Leaf litter

Ideal for large gardens, leaf litter is a blend of woodchips and leaves that will need replenishing every 12-18 months. This mulch may cause nitrogen drawdown.



### 5 Sugar cane mulch

Made from the leftovers of a cane harvest, sugar cane mulch often lasts a year or more. It is generally available in bales and is very easy to spread.

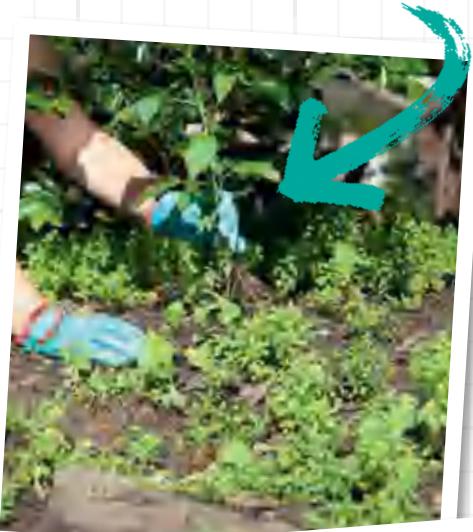


### Lucerne hay

Great for vegies and flowers, garden-grade lucerne hay breaks down quickly, adding nutrients to the soil. You can lay it under other mulches to reduce nitrogen drawdown.

# HOW TO MULCH

- 1 **REMOVE** all weeds from the area, making sure you get the roots as well.
- 2 **SPREAD** a quality manure or compost over the entire area, then add a controlled-release fertiliser such as Osmocote Plus Organics.
- 3 **WATER** the area well, then spread mulch evenly to a depth of at least 50mm, ensuring it is not pushed up against the stems or trunks of plants. Water the area well to finish.



Lucerne hay or sugar cane are the best choices for vegie gardens.  
**RIGHT** Buy mulch in bulk from a local landscape supplier.



Always wear gloves when handling mulches. A breathing mask is a good idea with baled mulches as well.

 **Problem spots**

- ⊕ **STEEP SLOPES** Pebble or gravel mulches are not considered suitable materials for steeply sloping areas. On very steep sites, secure chicken wire with landscape pins, then lay organic mulch on top. The mulch will bind to the chicken wire.
- ⊕ **WINDY AREAS** Use mulches with larger particle sizes or mixed

sizes in windy spots, as these will bind together better.

- ⊕ **TERMITES** In termite-prone areas, use coarse pine bark or cypress and avoid mulching flush with walls. Pebbles or gravels may be better close to buildings.
- ⊕ **BUSHFIRES** It is best to choose pebbles or gravels in bushfire-prone areas instead of laying combustible organic mulches. ⊕





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# SPRUCE UP AN OUTDOOR SETTING

Breathe new life into timeworn patio furniture by refinishing the surfaces

WORDS AND PICTURES MELISSA DARR

**D**IY blogger Melissa Darr bought this metal outdoor table setting from a garage sale nearly a decade ago, and it was now starting to show its age.

With unsightly flaking paint and rusty spots, it was looking the worse for wear. But as the table and chairs were still structurally sound, she was determined to bring them back to life.

After giving the setting a good clean and removing the flaking paint, a new paint finish was applied.

'The table and chairs just needed a little bit of cosmetic work to make them look brand-new again. We're hoping we can get another 10 years or more out of them,' says Melissa.

## PAINTING METAL

Melissa and her husband Bevan began the project by stripping the setting of any flaking paint.

Using a grinder with a wire brush disc, Bevan ground back all the old paint on the table and chairs to reveal the aluminium base underneath.



## EXPERT SECRETS

To prevent falling leaves or dirt from sticking to wet paint, make sure you work in an area that is under cover.



Before

The metal was thoroughly cleaned to remove any dust, then it was left to dry before being painted.

Melissa used rustproof paints, applying one coat of primer and two coats of spray paint, allowing it to dry thoroughly in between coats.

Easter weekend  
DIY inspiration



## SAFETY TIP

Always wear appropriate eye protection and a respirator when using spray paints and work outdoors, if possible.

### After

The revitalised table setting has become an elegant hub for this outdoor terrace.



Get more DIY from Melissa  
Follow her blog [thewhimsicalwife.com](http://thewhimsicalwife.com)

# Handyman

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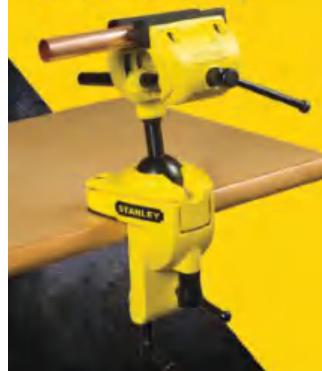
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# This month

Say goodbye to summer and get ready for autumn gardening

## Flowers to sow

Plant seeds now for beautiful and colourful blooms from early winter.

- FORGET-ME-NOT
- ENGLISH DAISY
- NEMOPHILA
- COREOPSIS
- HONESTY

Coreopsis



## Veggies to grow

Sow these vegetables in temperate and hot zones for a crop in 12 weeks.

- DWARF PEAS
- BEETROOT
- BROCCOLI
- CARROT
- SWEDE

Beetroot



## Do now

- CHOOSE the best plants and pots for a container garden, page 118.
- DESIGN a low-maintenance landscape using succulents, page 124.
- PLANT onions for a homegrown harvest in spring, page 130.

## WHAT'S IN COLOUR

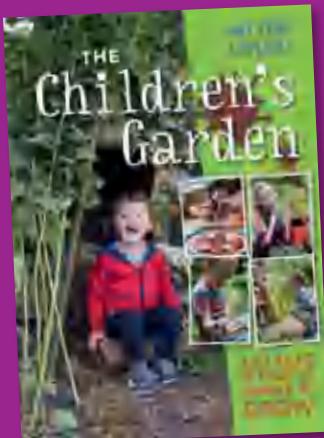
### • LOROPETALUM 'PLUM GORGEOUS'

This new variety of *Loropetalum chinensis* features deep-plum coloured foliage throughout the year and clusters of bright magenta flowering ribbons in spring and autumn.

Reaching 1500mm in height and spreading to 2000mm, its compact habit makes it an ideal pot plant. Or mass-plant it for year-round garden colour or use it for informal hedging.

Plant in full sun to part shade in moist, well-drained soil. It's dry tolerant once established and only needs shaping not pruning. Apply a slow-release fertiliser after flowering.

## BOOK CLUB



Written by a primary school teacher turned garden writer, and dad of two, *The Children's Garden* by Matthew Appleby (Quarto, \$30) is designed for the whole family.

It features 52 projects for a whole year of outdoor fun and will get the kids growing, cooking and crafting in no time.



Loropetalum 'Plum Gorgeous'

## To-do list

Make the transition from one season to the next.

- ✓ DEADHEAD flowering shrubs for more blooms.
- ✓ PREPARE soil in beds for new plantings by adding organic matter.
- ✓ START planting spring-flowering bulbs.
- ✓ PICK apples for storage before fully ripe.

- ✓ ZAP weeds to stop annuals from going to seed and spreading.
- ✓ PROTECT ripening grapes from birds.
- ✓ REDUCE watering of indoor plants as the weather cools down.
- ✓ LIFT and divide gerberas in warm climate zones. >

## SWEET PEA SHOWCASE



Pick sweet pea flowers frequently for more blooms.

For a spectacular sweet pea display next spring, sow the seeds now. Traditionally sown on St Patrick's Day, 17 March, you can actually plant them until the end of autumn.

Most cultivars reach 2-3m high and need the support of a tripod or trellis. Sow seeds directly where they are to grow in damp, well-drained soil

improved with organic matter. Choose a sunny position sheltered from wind.

Don't overwater while germinating, but water every couple of days after the seedlings emerge. Mulch with lucerne hay or sugar cane and apply a complete soluble fertiliser as the flowers develop.

**TIP** Not all varieties are fragrant so check the packet before buying.

### Designer pots

Now is a great time to make over the backyard or balcony with pots.

Use colourful, textured and patterned pots in different sizes to give your herb garden glamour or inject life into an empty corner.

Tuscan Path Small Saturn Pot in Bronze, small \$40. [tuscanpath.com.au](http://tuscanpath.com.au)



Tuscan Path Speckled Egg Pots, small \$10, medium \$15, large \$20.



## Feed now

Bloomers and grass need a boost this time of year.

- ⊕ FLOWERING PLANTS
- ⊕ VEGETABLES
- ⊕ HIBISCUS
- ⊕ LAWNS
- ⊕ ROSES



Hibiscus

## Prune now

Trim these herbs and hang in bunches to dry.

- ⊕ ROSEMARY
- ⊕ MARJORAM
- ⊕ OREGANO
- ⊕ THYME
- ⊕ SAGE



Oregano

## Harvest now

Pick these crops to use in autumn dishes.

- ⊕ MUSHROOMS
- ⊕ ASPARAGUS
- ⊕ EGGPLANT
- ⊕ CABBAGE
- ⊕ BEANS



Mushrooms

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Easter weekend  
DIY inspiration



# CARING FOR POTTED PLANTS

Give your container garden a little  
special attention and watch it thrive

WORDS CHERYL MADDOCKS



As well as bringing colour and life to the garden, potted plants are great decorating tools, as they soften the look of bare spaces and provide more opportunities to be surrounded by flowers and greenery.

You can use containers on balconies to enhance an outdoor living area or put a flowering pot plant at your front door to create an inviting entrance.

Even shady spots in the garden can be jazzed up with pots of ferns or colourful foliage plants.

So let your creative juices flow, as gardening is an art after all.

## CHOOSE A CONTAINER

There is a wide range of fabulous stone, plastic, timber, glazed and unglazed terracotta, and steel pots available in a variety of colours.

Select styles to go with your garden design and that blend in with wall colours and surrounding brickwork.

Reflect the mood of your garden in your choice of containers. A collection of pots of varying sizes, colours and textures often suits a cottage or country garden. In urban settings, bold pots and planting styles can be more effective.

Wide rather than high containers suit low-growing plants while large pots can feature dramatic architectural plants. Square pots look good filled with round, clipped plants.



**The size and shape of pots can determine the planting**



Always wear gloves when handling potting mix.



### HEALTH TIP

Take care when opening a bag of potting mix. Read the safety instructions and don't inhale the air that comes out of the bag.



#### The right mix

Give plants the potting mix to best suit their needs.

⊕ **PREMIUM** These must conform to Australian Standards regarding their content and quality. They have controlled-release fertiliser added, which will keep your plants growing for two months.

⊕ **REGULAR** While these must conform to Australian Standards, they are not required to include controlled-release fertiliser.

Avoid non-standard cheap mixes, which aren't submitted for Australian Standards testing.

⊕ **SPECIALISED** These are available for bulbs and plants such as cacti, succulents and orchids.

You can also buy mixes for terracotta pots and formulated mixes for herbs and vegetables. >

# ROOT-BOUND PLANTS

When they've been in pots for too long, plants become root-bound, and the roots fill the pot, circling around inside.

Gently tease out the roots from the potting mix, then cut off any that are damaged, as well as 25-50mm of solid roots at the base.

Repot the plant in a larger pot and put in a semi-shaded area for a week so the plant can establish, then move to its intended location.



**Stand containers on pot feet to assist drainage and prevent staining pavers**

**1 2 3**

**REPOT A PLANT** It's a good idea to repot plants every three years. This should be done, even if the plant hasn't outgrown its pot, as the potting mix degenerates and needs renewing. New plants from a nursery usually need repotting in a larger pot.



## 1 Add the potting mix

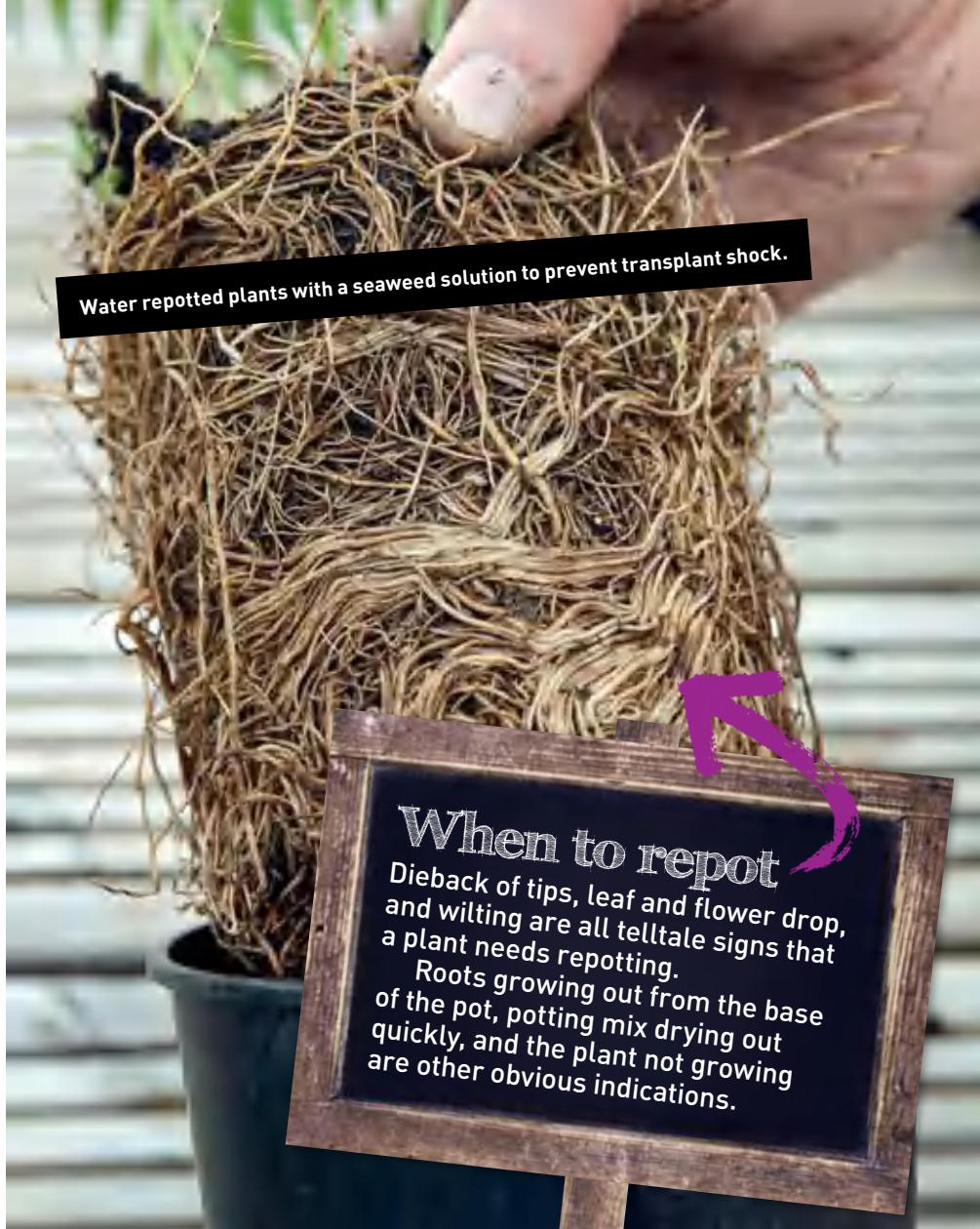
Transplant the plant into a larger pot so it has room to grow. A plant that is growing in a 20cm pot will need to be planted in a 25cm pot. Partially fill the new pot with potting mix, then remove the plant from the old pot.

## 2 Position the plant

Check the rootball of the plant and trim off any twisted or broken roots. Position the plant so that it sits at the same level as it did in the original pot, adding or removing potting mix as needed.

## 3 Top up with mix

Fill around the rootball with potting mix using a trowel, firming it in at the roots and making sure the mix is about 25mm from the rim of the pot so water will not spill over the edge. Water well and top up the potting mix if it sinks.



## PLANT PICKS

From sunny spots to windy balconies, there's a plant for any situation.

**SHADE** Aspidistra, begonia, clivia, bromeliad, camellia (small cultivars), impatiens, plectranthus, ferns, dianella and lomandra.

**SEMI-SHADE** Cordyline, bromeliad (morning sun only), liriope, dracaena, camellia (small cultivars), fuchsia, and daphne (morning sun only).

**SUN** Agave *attenuata*, nasturtium, gardenia, salvia, lavender, geranium, grevillea, kangaroo paw, flax, verbena, petunia, pansy, succulents and vegies.

**WIND** Bay, olive, oleander, flax, New Zealand cabbage tree, hebe, lomandra cultivars, dianella, geranium, westringia, rosemary, succulents, *Murraya paniculata*, bird of paradise, lavender and *Yucca elephantipes*.



### Pot basics

 There's only one rule when choosing a pot, if it holds soil, you can grow a plant in it.

Drainage is the essential factor so if the pot lacks drainage, drill a few large holes in the base.

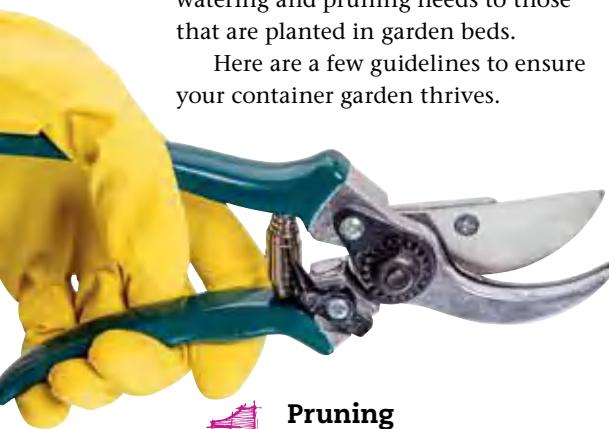
Large pots hold water better and are bolder in appearance than a variety of small pots. And large pots and troughs work best on windy balconies, as they don't dry out as rapidly as small ones.

Water frequently as dry potting mix becomes lighter and makes pots prone to blowing over. >

## KEEP THEM THRIVING

Potted plants have different feeding, watering and pruning needs to those that are planted in garden beds.

Here are a few guidelines to ensure your container garden thrives.



### 1 Pruning

Shrubby plants need regular tip-pruning to encourage dense growth and to keep them looking good. Many shrubs can be clipped into a ball or topiary shape for a formal look.



### 2 Feeding

Potting mixes contain enough food for a short time, but then you need to regularly apply a controlled-release plant food that will feed your plants for three-, six- or nine-month periods.

You can also use granulated or complete soluble fertilisers, or add a layer of compost or manure to the surface of potted plants.



### 4 Deadheading

Flowering annuals look fabulous in containers and flowers can change with the seasons. Keep them looking their best by regularly removing dead blooms and leaves.

### 3 Watering

Water pots deeply until it runs out of the drainage holes. You'll be able to work out a routine based on the weather. In the warm months, you will sometimes need to water daily.



#### Water-saving ways

Help your plants thrive with these tips.

- ⊕ **ADD** water-holding crystals to the potting mix when repotting.
- ⊕ **MULCH** with pebbles, sphagnum moss or lucerne hay.
- ⊕ **TRY** plastic instead of terracotta pots, as they have better water retention, and use an attractive terracotta container as a sleeve.
- ⊕ **SPRAY** the inside of unglazed terracotta pots with a sealant.
- ⊕ **LINE** unglazed pots with black plastic, but don't cover the base and drainage holes. ◉

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# Succulent Superstars

Create standout displays in garden beds or pots with these waterwise plants

WORDS CHERYL MADDocks

Agave attenuata



## Grow in beds

Plant succulents of varying heights and shapes, combined with waterwise perennials, to create interesting foliage compositions.

Large succulents can be used in the garden in a minimalist style, with just a few sculptural plants set in areas of gravel or stone.

Low-growing sempervivum, sedum, echeveria, *Senecio serpens* and *Cotyledon orbiculata* are ideal

Not only do they look stunning with their many different leaf shapes and colours, succulents are also drought-resistant.

Collectively known as xerophytes, they have adapted to arid conditions, developing storage structures in their leaves, stems or roots that store enough water to survive periods of drought.

This makes them ideal for dry areas, windy sites or coastal hotspots.

Ranging in size from the Mexican native *Carnegiea gigantea* that can reach 15m to low-growing sedums, they make outstanding features in garden beds and wonderful pot plants.

groundcovers, while agaves and aloes make great feature plants.

PLANT Sun and well-drained soil are essential. If drainage is poor, use a raised bed or a sloping bank.

GROW Feed in spring and summer with an all-purpose plant food. Don't overwater, as most succulents will virtually survive on rainwater.

Mulch with black, grey or white pebbles to give the garden structure and prevent weed growth.



Cheryl

## EXPERT SECRETS

While they can tolerate a great degree of neglect, succulents will grow stronger, with better colour and form, if given a little care.

### Grow in pots

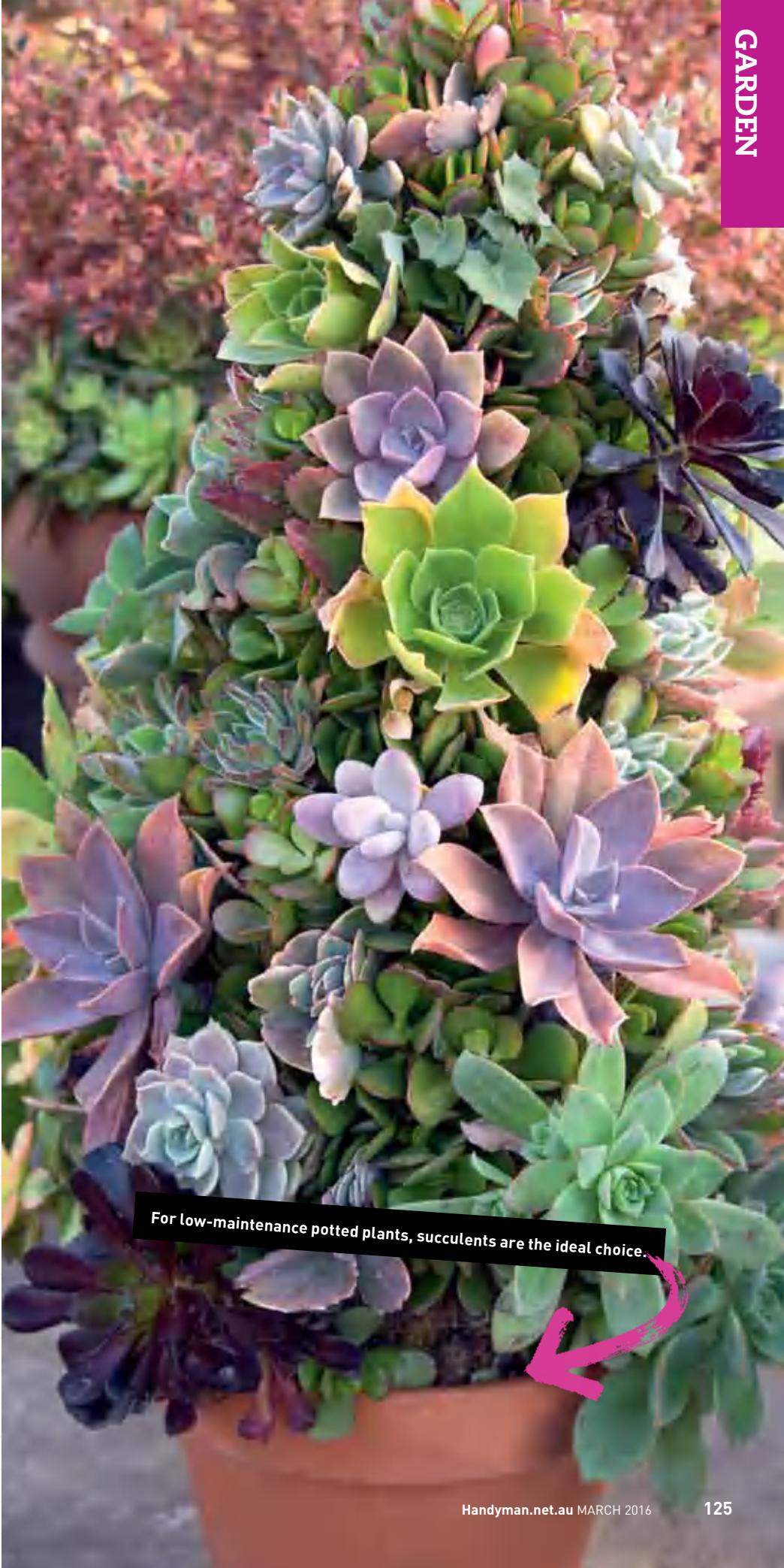
Due to their low water demands, few plants are more suited to container cultivation than succulents.

 **PLANT** Use a potting mix formulated for cacti and succulents.

Most succulents like a lot of sun, but some, including *Rhipsalis* spp., *Aeonium tabuliforme*, *gasteria* and *haworthia*, appreciate shade from the hot afternoon sun. *Agave attenuata* will also take a little shade.

 **GROW** Feed with a soluble fertiliser in early spring, summer and autumn, or just apply a six-month slow-release fertiliser during spring.

When planting, keep the potting mix barely moist and don't water for the first week. Water when the mix is nearly dry, but don't overwater. A weekly watering is enough for most potted succulents once established. >



For low-maintenance potted plants, succulents are the ideal choice.



**7 Sempervivum**

These are commonly called hens-and-chicks because of the way they multiply.

The chicks grow from the base of the mother plant and are attached by thin stems. They can be detached and replanted and will soon grow their own roots.

• **GROW** in shallow bowls, rockeries or hollowed-out rocks, as they don't need much soil to survive. They revel in cool climates.

**9 Kalanchoe**

With interesting leaves and pretty flowers, kalanchoes range in size from small groundcovers to large shrubs. They grow well in humid tropical and sub-tropical climates.

• **GROW** in garden beds or pots.

**8 Sedum**

Sedums range from groundcovering plants to *Sedum spectabile*, which reaches a height of about 60cm.

While most are evergreen, some die down during winter and reappear in spring. They can also have a trailing habit.

• **GROW** in containers and garden beds.

**10 Yucca**

Various yuccas have soft-tipped leaves, but most have a terminal spine, so take care where they are planted in the garden bed.

The cream or white flowers are produced on tall spikes.

• **GROW** in garden beds.

**Hanging habit**

Certain succulents have a trailing habit and these are ideal for planting in tall urns or hanging baskets.

**Jelly bean**

The green leaves of jelly bean (*Sedum rubrotinctum*) turn red in dry or cold conditions. Every leaf that drops can produce a plant.

**Burro's tail**

Burro's tail (*Sedum morganianum*) is the perfect plant for a hanging basket, featuring long stems covered in blue-green leaves.



While rhipsalis prefers a warm climate, high humidity and a shady position in the garden, it will tolerate morning sun. >



# GARDEN BED MAKEOVER



**BELOW** Add a few flowering cacti to introduce additional texture and colour to a garden bed of succulents.



## Prepare the bed

To eliminate weeds, the bed was mulched with stone. To keep the stone from running into the lawn, Lee installed edging around the border, tapping it in with a mallet.

Now the plants are thriving, some even flowering, and have turned a scrappy-looking border into a feature of the garden.

**After**

The garden bed is now a focal point of the front yard and very low maintenance.

**Before**

**T**his garden bed at the front of *Handyman* managing editor Lee Dashiell's house had never looked good.

As it was highly visible, he had tried growing various perennials, shrubs, bulbs and annuals, and revamped the bed multiple times.

'Over the years, I've replaced the soil, mulched and installed watering

systems, but the problem is that it's in baking sun all summer, and the existing and surrounding soil is lacking in nutrients,' says Lee.

He decided to cut his losses and strip the bed and plant succulents, as they thrive in these conditions.

There were a few succulents and cacti in the garden, so they were moved and new ones bought to fill in. ♦



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**BELOW** Install edging to keep the the garden bed looking tidy.

LEE'S  
PICKS



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# GROW YOUR OWN ONIONS

An essential ingredient in many dishes, this vegie makes a great backyard crop

WORDS CHERYL MADDOCKS

**T**his bulb vegetable belongs to the Allium genus and there's a wide choice available for cultivation in the vegetable patch.

You can choose from bulbous red-, white- or brown-skinned onions, or closely related species that are commonly used in many cuisines.

The popularity of onions derives from their taste, health-giving qualities and versatility. They contain fibre, iron, potassium and vitamins A, B6, C and E, and are a good source of folic acid.

Now is the time to plant them, and all are easy to grow in a sunny spot without taking up a lot of space.



PICTURES iSTOCK

# HOW TO PLANT

Onions come in different shapes and skin colours, including brown, white and red, and it's important to sow each of them at the appropriate time.

There are early, mid-season and late-maturing varieties, and planting them in the right season prevents them bolting to seed.

**+** **GROW** Onions can be grown from seedlings, which are available from nurseries, or sown from seed.

Sow the seeds directly where they are to grow and thin when 100mm tall, spacing the plants 70-100mm apart. Don't plant seedlings too deep, just cover the roots and the stem bases. Apply a complete fertiliser in summer.

**+** **HARVEST** They are ready to harvest about 6-8 months from planting, when the leaves are dry and fall over. Once pulled from the ground, leave them in the sun for a few days to cure, then store in wire baskets or mesh bags.

**+** **IN THE KITCHEN** Brown and white onions are essential for many dishes and red onions are good raw in salads.



## Soil matters

All members of the onion family like a well-drained soil that has been previously enriched with organic matter such as compost or Yates Dynamic Lifter.

Too much manure can cause onions to rot and produce excess leaf growth. Rotate onion crops yearly to prevent the build-up of soil fungal diseases.

## GROW TIP

To enjoy a continual supply of onions in the garden, make successive sowings with varieties of a different maturity.



**The taste of onions ranges from strong to mild.**

## An onion a day...

Researchers have found that red onions can help inhibit heart disease and studies reveal that a high consumption of allium vegetables can protect against stomach cancer.

Studies also show that men who eat more than 10g of allium vegetables a day are about 50% less likely to develop prostate cancer.

Brown and white onions contain sulphides similar to those found in garlic that may assist with lowering blood lipid levels. >

# CLOSE RELATIVES

In addition to the brown, white and red-skinned types, you can also grow closely related species of the genus, which include leeks, spring onions, shallots and tree onions.

Every variety has that distinctive onion smell created by alkyl sulphides.



## Spring onion

Harvested for its green shoots, a spring onion is an immature onion that has not yet made a bulb.

**+** **GROW** The seeds of spring onions can be sown at almost any time of the year, and you can also buy seedlings from nurseries.

Sow the seeds directly where they are to grow, in garden beds or

containers, and make successive sowings every 4-6 weeks.

Use a soluble liquid fertiliser fortnightly and water regularly.

**+** **HARVEST** They will be ready for harvesting in about 8-12 weeks.

**+** **IN THE KITCHEN** Use raw in salads, stir-fries, crepes, quiches and tarts. Add to cheese scones, scrambled eggs and omelettes.

## Mistaken identity

Onions can be confused with each other. This is often the case with spring and green onions. But what they do have in common is they are both immature onions.

In Australia, what we call a spring onion is often referred to as a green onion, eschalot, shallot or scallion.

Many varieties of onion can be grown and picked young as spring onions, but it is best to buy seeds labelled as spring onions.

Green onions are also called spring onions by many people, as they are immature onions planted in autumn and harvested in spring.

They are harvested with small white round bulbs and long green stems, which are used in the kitchen as spring onions.

## Shallot

Also called eschalots, shallots have a mild, sweet flavour. They develop brown- or red-skinned underground bulbs.

**+** **GROW** Shallots are grown from bulblets or cloves, like garlic. You can buy the bulblets from nurseries in autumn and winter.

To plant, space 150-200mm apart with just the tops showing above the soil level. Feed monthly with a complete soluble fertiliser.

More small bulblets will multiply around the mother plant, which can be saved and replanted.

**+** **HARVEST** They are ready to harvest when the tops start to fall over and before they flower.

**+** **IN THE KITCHEN** They are widely used in Asian and French cooking.



Shallots can be eaten raw, pickled, boiled, baked or fried





The leaves, bulbils and bulbs of tree onions are edible.

### Tree onion

Also called Egyptian and walking onions, tree onions (*Allium cepa Proliferum Group*) have an unusual habit in that they grow and sprout bulbils in the flowerheads.

As the bulbils grow, the weight of the flowerheads causes the stem to bend and touch the ground, where the bulbs take root.

**GROW** Plant the bulbs 30mm deep and 150-200mm apart. A very hardy onion, it will even survive in frozen ground. Apply a soluble plant food every six weeks.

**HARVEST** Pick when the stalks are dry. Replant bulbils that have formed on the top for a new crop.

**IN THE KITCHEN** Use in salads, stir-fries, omelettes and quiches. The bulbils are good for pickling.



Add sprouts to salads and sandwiches for a mild onion taste.

### Leek

Although not as dominant in taste as onions, leeks don't lack flavour.

**GROW** The seeds are sown now and transplanted to garden beds when about 120mm high.

You can also plant seedlings. Dig 200mm deep trenches, add the seedlings and cover with a little soil to hold them upright.

Slowly fill in the trenches as the seedlings grow. This blanches the stem bases, keeping them white.

Feed monthly with a fertiliser that's high in nitrogen.

**HARVEST** Pick about three months after planting when about 20mm thick.

**IN THE KITCHEN** Use in soups, stews, sauces and pies. Leek also teams well with chicken.



### HEALTH TIP

Leeks are used to help clear congestion in the respiratory system and are a good remedy for slow digestion.

### Simply sprouts

Onion sprouts are exceptionally good for you. Weight for weight, like all sprouts, they yield a huge level of nutrients compared to mature vegetables.

Growing your own means you can be sure you will be eating them at their freshest and at their nutritional peak.

You can sprout them in the kitchen in a tray or jar, but only use seeds that are labelled for sprouting, as those for sowing in the garden are not intended for consumption. >

## RECIPE TIP

Swap the beer with stock and 2 tablespoons soy or Worcestershire sauce and use a little fresh thyme instead of a bay leaf.

Serves 4

# Caramelised onion, beef and beer soup

PREPARATION TIME 15 mins

COOKING TIME 30 mins

## Ingredients

30g butter  
 2 tablespoons olive oil  
 500g onions, thinly sliced  
 2 teaspoons caster sugar  
 300g fillet steak, thickly sliced  
 Salt and freshly ground black pepper  
 1 garlic clove, crushed  
 1 cup dark beer, such as Guinness  
 1 bay leaf  
 3 cups beef stock  
 2 tablespoons chopped fresh flat-leaf (Italian) parsley, to garnish

**1** **HEAT** the butter and two-thirds of the oil in a large, heavy-based saucepan or flameproof casserole dish. Stir in the onion and sugar. Cover the pan and cook, stirring occasionally, over medium heat for 10 minutes. Remove the lid and increase the heat slightly. Cook, stirring frequently, for a further 5 minutes or until the onion softens and turns golden brown.

**2** **HEAT** a heavy-based frying pan until very hot while the onions are caramelising. Brush the steak slices with the remaining oil and season lightly. Fry for 3 minutes on each side, turning once, or until golden brown but still pink inside. Remove from the heat and cover with foil to keep warm. Set aside.

**3** **ADD** the garlic, beer and bay leaf to the onion. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat to a simmer. Cook, uncovered, for 5 minutes. Add the stock and adjust the seasoning. Cook until boiling, then remove from the heat.

**4** **SLICE** the reserved steak into thin ribbon-like strips, adding any juices from the meat to the soup. Discard the bay leaf. Ladle the soup into wide bowls and place a few meat strips in the centre of each serving. Sprinkle each with the parsley. 



# What's on this March

## FREE Kids' D.I.Y. Workshops

» <b>Saturday 5</b> <b>GARDEN CRAFT</b> Design a masterpiece for your garden at home	» <b>Saturday 19</b> <b>EASTER</b> Come in and create one of our Easter craft projects
» <b>Sunday 6</b> <b>NATURE</b> Get creative and make a living artwork	» <b>Sunday 20</b> <b>CRAFT</b> Have fun getting crafty with your hands
» <b>Saturday 12</b> <b>WOODWORK</b> Make something special out of wood	» <b>Saturday 26</b> <b>EASTER</b> Come in and create one of our Easter craft projects
» <b>Sunday 13</b> <b>GARDEN CREATURES</b> Use different materials to make a creature	» <b>Sunday 27</b> <b>GROW YOUR OWN</b> Learn tips for growing vegetables at home

Our workshops are held every weekend at 11am, 12.30pm and 2pm. For specific topics, ask instore or go to [bunnings.com.au](http://bunnings.com.au). If you live in South Australia, speak to a team member or visit [bunnings.com.au](http://bunnings.com.au) for details about our great one-on-one D.I.Y. workshops. These workshops run from 10am to 4pm each Saturday and Sunday.

## FREE Adult D.I.Y. Workshops

» <b>Saturday 5</b> <b>OUTDOOR PROJECTS</b> Gain useful skills from team members	» <b>Saturday 26 and Sunday 27</b> <b>GARDENING</b> Grow herbs and vegetables at home
» <b>Sunday 6</b> <b>BASIC WORKSHOP SKILLS</b> Learn simple techniques and tool skills	
» <b>Saturday 12 and Sunday 13</b> <b>PROJECT WEEKEND</b> Get advice and handy tips for your project	
» <b>Saturday 19 and Sunday 20</b> <b>PAINTING AND PLASTERING</b> Learn how to master renovating basics	

For more information on other instore events or to book, visit [bunnings.com.au/yourstore](http://bunnings.com.au/yourstore)

1



2



3



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8



7



6



5



4



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